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THE ALL-WOMAN ISSUE

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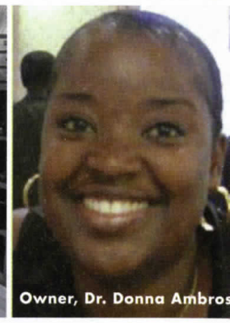

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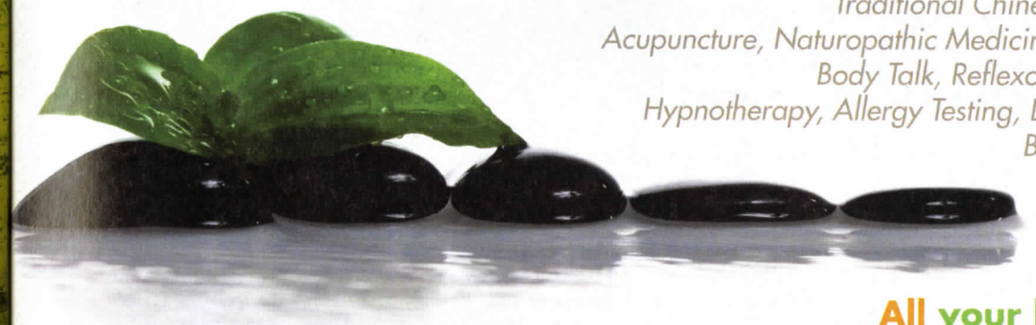

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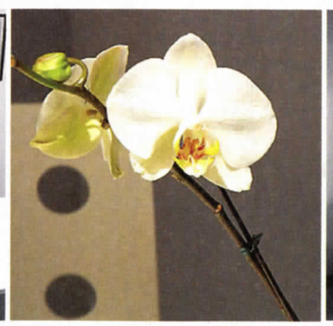

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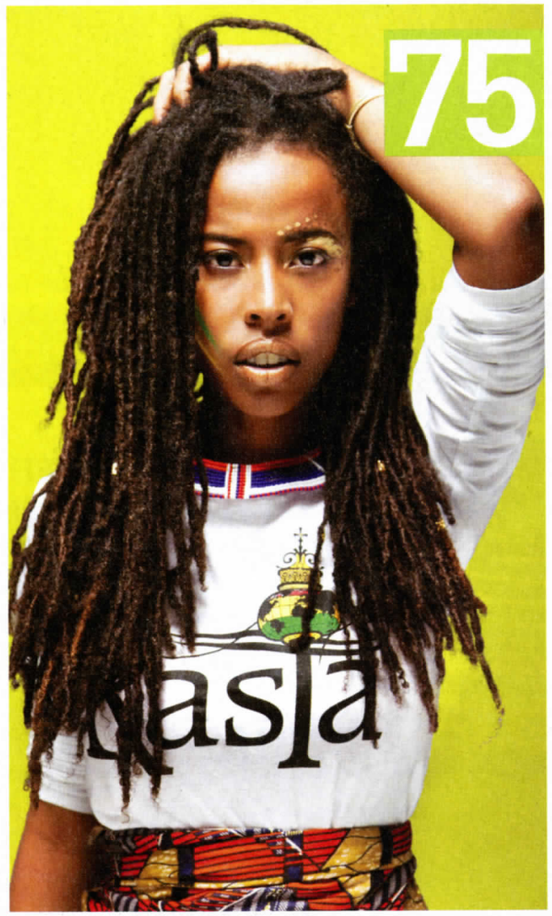

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feedback

I love this magazine, it is something to sway about! It is the epitome of community passion! You guys finally found a vehicle of communication whereby our community can turn to get relevant and up-to-date information on what's right! Love it lots! Keep it coming!

It takes a village.
— ANN-MARIE MOULTON, TORONTO

Your Caribana issue is awesome. It caught the corner of my eye in one of your street boxes — sorry but I emptied the box so I could make sure all my friends got a copy. Pride, man, Pride.
— JASON, BRAMPTON

I have been following *Sway* since it first came out. I think I have every copy. I even re-read articles from time to time as they inspire me so much. Now I have your latest Caribana issue to add to my collection. Many many thanks.
— CLAUDETTE HAMOUDA

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK.
WRITE US: LETTERS@SWAYMAG.CA

***Cover shoot:** behind the scenes*

Photography Alexis Finch
Styled by Donovan Whyte
Makeup by Roxanne DeNobrega
Hair by Christos Cox for Urban Textures Salons

ON THE COVER

Keisha Chanté in a **Herve Leger** gold lame dress ($1650); **Ngozi Paul** in sequin gown with bow by **Seventy** ($828); **Dr. Avis Glaze** in own outfit with vintage **Chanel** earrings $250, **remixclothing.ca**, and beaded cluster ring ($18) and beaded necklace, both by **Aldo**

INSIDE

Keshia Chanté (page 60) in **BCBG** animal print sequin dress ($718), **Chanel** vintage earrings $250, **remixclothing.ca**
Ngozi Paul (page 68) in brocade cocktail dress ($298), **myfavoritedresses.com**

contributors

Simona Siad

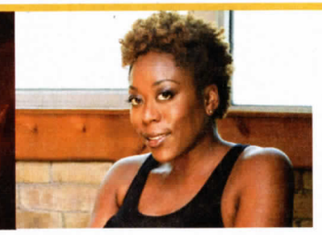
A former associate editor at *Sway* and *Canadian Immigrant* magazines, Simona Siad has worked as a writer/reporter for the *Toronto Star*, *BET*, *Dime Magazine* and as a human rights media trainer for Journalists for Human Rights.

Elesia Stewart

Elesia Stewart is a creative beauty consultant, giving women the scoop on which beauty products are worth their hefty prices and which ones you can afford to be thrifty with. Having honed her skills at Holt Renfrew, Stewart believes, "Makeup is an enhancement and expression of beauty, personality and style that makes a person look and feel fabulous."

Tricia Campbell Hall

If you've ever watched MTV Canada, checked out a VAWK runway show or perused the pages of *Today's Bride*, *FILLER* or *Strut* magazines, then you've seen the work of wardrobe stylist Tricia Campbell Hall. For a behind-the-scenes look at her life in the fast fashion lane (including the shoot on page 28), visit triciacampbell.blogspot.com.



Alexis Finch

Alexis Finch has been a Toronto-based photographer for the past 10 years. In addition to her work, that includes documentary photography and editorial spreads, she has led photography workshops for youth in Toronto's under-served neighbourhoods since 2004.

Sharing *Her*story

OUR FIRST-EVER ALL-WOMAN ISSUE

I've had the concept for this particular issue of *Sway* in mind for quite a while — an issue filled with Canada's most powerful, influential and well-respected women.

My motivation for this type of content developed in response to the CBC special *The Greatest Canadian*, which I watched sometime ago. It was broadcast over several days and a two-step process voted in the people. The series featured bios on the likes of David Suzuki, Don Cherry, Wayne Gretzky and the contest's ultimate winner Tommy Douglas (the father of Canada's universal healthcare). The fact that not one of the Top 10 finalists was Black did not surprise me. Let's be honest, this is not the first time that excellence in the Black community has been overlooked. However, the realization that in the eyes of Canada's public there was not a single woman whose contribution to our society was deemed worthy of recognition left me dumbfounded.

It also made me think about the societal barriers to success that I have faced as a Black man, and how those faced by Black women must be exponentially greater.

And yet, today we celebrate the inspiring achievements of Canadian women who have overcome both racism and sexism to become community leaders, corporate innovators, political visionaries and iconic symbols of true Canadian greatness.

As we leaf through this very special issue of *Sway*, let each of us resolve to celebrate the continued success of Black women, whose achievements add to the narrative of Canadian history. After all, it is our story to tell....

Stay blessed

JON SARPONG
JSARPONG@SWAYMAG.CA

Stephanie Pollard

Born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, Stephanie Pollard came to Canada in 2002. She currently studies journalism at Durham College. Pollard is a regular contributor to *Sway* magazine and writes on a variety of topics.

Saada Branker

Originally from Montreal, Saada Branker is a freelance features writer who has been living in Toronto since 1996. In this issue, Branker talks with documentary filmmaker Lana Lovell who, in her latest film, tackles the stereotypes of single Black mothers.

Sway

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 3
THE POWER AND PULSE OF A PEOPLE

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Notable Quotables

"Black women have always been these vixens, these animalistic erotic women. Why can't we just be the sexy American girls next door?"

Supermodel, producer, actress and television host **Tyra Banks** on the global perception of Black women

"I love being a woman and I love being a friend to other women. I think we learn from our female friends. It's good to support each other, and I try to put that message in my music."

Powerhouse singer **Beyonce Knowles** on female relationships

"The struggle for equality is not just a woman's struggle. It is the struggle of every person who demands respect, justice and dignity. I strongly believe that we have everything to gain when we give women the means to change their lives for the better. Empower women and you will see a decrease in poverty, illiteracy, illness and violence."

Former Governor General Michaëlle Jean comments on the eve of the "Together for Women's Security" conference

"People thought I should hate myself because I don't look like 'the norm,' but what is the norm?
I absolutely believe that you can be anything you want to be and should love yourself, no matter how you look or what anybody thinks."

Precious **star Gabourey Sidibe on being comfortable in her own skin**

"I'm convinced that we Black women possess a special indestructible strength that allows us t not only get down, but to get up, to get through and to get over."

Superstar **Janet Jackson** on the strength of Black women

Phoenix Clinics

Dr. Innocent 'Dumebi Okafor, MD, CCFP

Caseka McIntosh (Clinic Manager)

Dr. Okafor and associates opened their doors to the public in April 2010 and they are pleased to welcome new patients to their Brampton Clinics!

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Need a New Family Doctor? Dr. Okafor would be more than happy to look after you and your loved ones. He has been practicing medicine for almost 20 years. With his wealth of expertise, he can definitely help with all your health-care needs. One of the doctor's focuses includes obstetrics: taking care of mother and baby from conception until birth... and beyond. However, Dr. Okafor prides himself on compassion and attention to detail of each family member's individual needs.

COSMETIC CLINIC
No more bad hair days!
At Phoenix Clinics, professional estheticians safely remove unsightly hair using modern laser technology. Other enhancement treatments, such as Microdermabrasion, are also offered. Microdermabrasion is a slightly abrasive procedure which gently blasts micro diamonds and/or crystals onto skin in order to reduce negative effects of over exposure to the sun, pimples, aging, dark spots, scars, blemishes and acne marks. Skin is left looking radiant and smooth!

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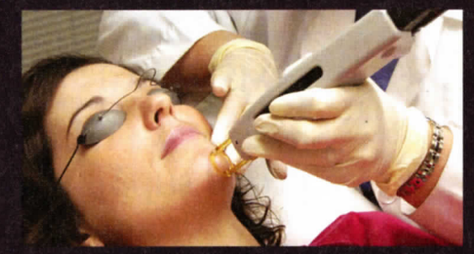
The fitness centre specializes in one-on-one sessions in a private, personalized environment. This helps to assure that clients get the time and attention they require from professionals. Weight loss plans are formulated for all shapes and sizes, including obese body types. The centre also offers injury rehabilitation by registered physiotherapists, fitness instructors and personal trainers. Discrete Fitness Centre is fun and will have you looking and feeling your best.



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UNDER *-the-* RADAR

Keep an eye on these health issues and their often-ignored symptoms

BY STEPHANIE POLLARD

ISSUE: DIABETES

Individuals with diabetes have difficulty processing sugar (or glucose) once food has been digested. The causes of Type 2 diabetes (the type most commonly found in Black women) are unclear. However, Black women are more susceptible to the ills of the disease due to socio-economic issues, including inaccessibility to proper healthcare. Symptoms include blurred vision, frequent bladder and vaginal infections as well as increased thirst, hunger and fatigue.

TREATMENT:

There is no cure for Type 2 diabetes. However, a low-fat diet, exercise and limited alcohol consumption can keep the disease under control, without large amounts of medication. Also, regularly checking blood sugar levels prevents the disease from worsening. "The staggering thing is that 95 per cent of diabetes cases are Type 2. That means the type of diabetes you can take control of," says Dr. Drew Ordon, one of television's favourite physicians on the weekly series *The Doctors*.

ISSUE: HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure is a result of increased pressure in the arteries that carry blood pumped from the heart to the tissues and organs in the body. A blood pressure reading of 140/90 is an indication of high blood pressure. The top number (systolic pressure) matches the pressure in the arteries as the heart contracts and pumps blood into them. The bottom number (diastolic pressure) matches the pressure in the arteries as the heart relaxes after the contraction. The diastolic pressure shows the lower pressure to which the person is exposed. High blood pressure produces a series of symptoms that include headaches, nosebleeds and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, high blood pressure can weaken blood vessels in the brain. This causes them to break and bleed, which may result in a stroke.

TREATMENT:

While there is no cure for high blood pressure, it can be controlled. Like diabetes, changes need to happen: lifestyle, possibly medication and especially diet. "For a long time, we thought eating a fatty diet had long-term effects on your cardiovascular health. The reality is, it happens almost immediately," says Dr. Travis Stork, one of the four physician hosts on television's *The Doctors*. In terms of diet, eating and cooking with less salt and staying clear of foods that are high in fat and cholesterol are vital. Your new lifestyle should also include exercise, specifically 30 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week.

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Sugar Myths

- **Myth: People with diabetes can't eat sugar.** Eating sugar does not cause diabetes. You would be surprised how many people think that sugar is off-bounds for people with diabetes. The fact is, people with diabetes can eat anything, including sugar. However they need to stick to their diabetes meal plan and should monitor their intake of added sugar and reduce when possible.
- **Myth: All sugar is bad.** Sugar is a type of carbohydrate. Carbohydrates are essential nutrients. They are broken down into glucose (sugar) to provide the body's cells with energy. Carbohydrates are found in fruit, milk, grain products, and starchy vegetables like potato.
- **Myth: Fruits are loaded with sugar and should be avoided.** Fruits contain natural sugar as well as fibre, vitamins, and minerals. They make a healthy snack choice. Just remember - try to eat your fruit and not drink it! A cup of orange juice has 60 per cent more sugar and nearly 4 times less fibre than an orange. Aim for 3 fruits per day, spread throughout the day.

Just because you have diabetes doesn't mean you have to go without sugar. To successfully manage your diabetes, be consistent with the amount of carbohydrate you consume and space out your intake throughout the day. Try these Mini Raspberry Cheesecakes – they're delicious, diabetes friendly, but not loaded with sugar.

kraft foods Living Well with Diabetes

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Mini Raspberry Cheesecakes

Prep Time: 10 min

Total Time: 4 hours (incl. refrigerating)

What You Need!

4 ***Peek Freans Lifestyle Selections*** Shortcake Biscuits, crushed
1 pkg. (250 g) ***Philadelphia*** Brick Cream Cheese, Light* softened
1 cup low-fat cottage cheese
3 Tbsp. sugar
1/4 tsp. vanilla
1/4 cup light sour cream
1 tsp. cornstarch
1 egg
2 Tbsp. ***Kraft*** Pure Red Raspberry Jam

Make It!

HEAT oven to 350°F.

SPRINKLE biscuit crumbs onto bottoms of 12 paper-lined mini cheesecake pans or paper-lined muffin cups. Beat cream cheese, cottage cheese, sugar and vanilla in a medium bowl with mixer until well blended. Add sour cream and cornstarch; mix well. Add egg; beat just until blended. Spoon into prepared pans.

BAKE 30 min or until centres are almost set. Cool completely. Refrigerate 3 hours. Remove cheesecakes from pans just before serving; discard paper liners (if used). Place cheesecakes on serving plate.

MICROWAVE jam in microwaveable bowl on HIGH 25 sec. or just until warmed. Spoon over cheesecakes. Top desserts with fresh raspberries before serving.

Note: For cheesecakes with a smoother texture, blend cottage cheese in blender until smooth before using as directed.

Makes:12 servings, 1 mini cheesecake (43 g) each.

CAL 110 , FAT 5 g (sat 3.0g), CHOL 35 mg, SODIUM 220 mg, CARB 10 g, FIBRE 0 g, SUGARS 7 g, PROTEIN 6 g, VIT A 6%DV, VIT C 0%DV, CALCIUM 4%DV, IRON 2%DV.

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THE TRUTH ABOUT FIBROIDS

Erica Phillips investigates the condition that affects about 25 per cent of women

Fibroids. They can be as small as a pinpoint or as large as a grapefruit and drastically interfere with a woman's quality of life. Also known as leiomyomas, these tumors especially affect Black women. "For a lot of Black women, fibroids are extremely aggressive and it hits them younger (in their 20s)," says Dr. Gaylene Pron of the tumors that grow on the outside and inside of the uterus or within the uterine wall. "They create havoc with the bleeding and pain."

Dr. Pron is an epidemiologist and an associate professor who specializes in new health technologies at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine. She adds that the cause of fibroids is uncertain, but they have little to do with lifestyle. Instead, they tend to run in families. "If you're predisposed, you're predisposed," Dr. Pron says.

And Black women seem to be more predisposed than others. The Canadian Women's Health Network reports that fibroids disproportionately affect Black women, who are three times as likely to suffer from them than other women. Adds Sharon Dore, a clinical nurse specialist of obstetrics and gynaecology, and an associate clinical professor of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and School of Nursing at Hamilton Health Sciences: "In Afro-Canadian or Afro-American women the rate of fibroids is about 50 per cent for women over 35." In general, fibroids appear in 20 to 25 per cent of women, are very common in those who are over 30, significantly overweight or those who have never had children.

The Center for Uterine Fibroids at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston says women with fibroids usually have six or seven of the growths, which tend to shrink after menopause. Symptoms include very heavy and painful periods, and abnormal uterine bleeding, but Dr. Pron points out that an ultrasound is the best way to confirm their presence.

Although they are benign, Dr. Pron says the tumors can cause a range of problems such as pain during intercourse, problems with fertility, repeated miscarriages, and long and heavy menstrual cycles with excessive bleeding that, in some cases, causes anemia to the point of requiring iron injections. But Dore says fibroids rarely become cancerous.

Treatment varies depending on size. Very small fibroids that cause no symptoms usually don't require treatment, and doctors may prescribe medication to treat the heavy bleeding and pain. Dore says there are five main surgical treatments: myomectomy, hysterectomy, uterine fibroid embolization, endometrial ablation and removing the fibroids by inserting a tube through the cervix. A hysterectomy, whereby the uterus and ovaries are removed, is no longer the default treatment. Uterine fibroid embolization, which was discovered by accident in France, is becoming the most popular option, as it leaves the uterus intact and makes pregnancy possible. During this procedure, blood supply to the fibroids is cut off, which in turn kills them. Recovery time can be as short as two days, compared to two to four weeks for a hysterectomy.

Before going through with any procedure, Dr. Pron suggests speaking to the surgeon and asking about the risks, post-surgery pain management as well as short-term and long-term complications.

→ For more information, visit fibroids.net or sirweb.org

Canada's Hollywood trainer

Queen Latifah

Ontario-raised healthy lifestyle coach **JEANETTE JENKINS** is making A-list celebs sweat BY DUANE WATSON

Nine years ago, Jeanette Jenkins became the first female grand prize winner on the stunt game show *Fear Factor*. Her toughest challenge was a 60-foot tightrope crawl, stretching between two rooftops at 150 feet. Despite her fear of heights, once Jenkins touched the rope, she moved steadily and deliberately — never stopping, looking down or looking back. Jenkins employed the same approach when she started her career as a healthy lifestyle coach.

Jeanette Jenkins

Born in Hollywood, Jenkins grew up in Oshawa, Ontario and earned her degree in human kinetics from the University of Ottawa. Then the dual citizen made her way back to Tinseltown. "I knew that I had to pick a city where people had a lucrative income, where they could afford this type of service," she says of her move. "But living in a country of 30 million... there's more people than that in California alone. I was like, 'Shoooot! I'm going to make it happen!'"

And that's precisely what she did, instructing classes at Crunch and Sports Club L. A., two of the best gyms at the time. She also gained success with her *Hollywood Trainer* DVD series. Her passion and hard work have resulted in landing celeb clients like Queen Latifah, Paula Patton, Kelly Rowland, Kendra Wilkinson, Robin Thicke, Terrell Owens and Kimora Lee Simmons.

Taking on two of society's biggest preoccupations — celebrity and weight loss — the city of L.A. quickly taught Jenkins that a trainer's success is measured merely by how good they looked in their Lycra, rather than expertise. "When I first came here I was in good shape, but I wasn't ripped and I found those prejudices coming towards me," she says. "I had to learn a lot more. I was able to educate myself and ended up becoming a holistic nutritionist. The reality of being in Hollywood is that people do judge a book by its cover."

Well, people favourably judged Jenkins' book *Hollywood Trainer Weight Loss Plan*, making it a national bestseller. Now, Jenkins is working closely with trainer Jillian Michaels (*The Biggest Loser*) on a major TV venture and has also been tapped by Jane Fonda for her new DVD series, *The New Faces of Fitness*. With more A-list celebrities waiting to work with her and the recently-released *Hollywood Trainer: Blast the Belly Fat* DVD, Jenkins barely has time to stop, slow down or look back.

Not that she'd want to.

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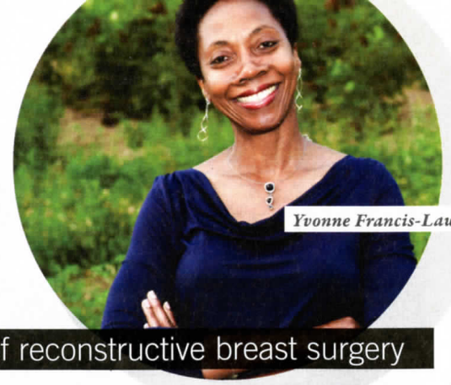

Yvonne Francis-Lawrence

After a double mastectomy, this woman opted out of reconstructive breast surgery

BY STEPHANIE POLLARD

The day in 1997 that Yvonne Francis-Lawrence found out she was pregnant, was also the day she was made aware that death loomed precariously close. As she processed the news that a life was growing within her, Francis-Lawrence's doctor told her, "You have breast cancer." Only one thought occurred to the mother-to-be: "'I'm going to die.' That's what went through my head first." Francis-Lawrence's doctor quickly scheduled a lumpectomy, a procedure during which only the cancerous lump and tissue are removed. The decision to forgo radiation treatment was made to shield the baby from any harmful side effects.

Six years later, a mammogram detected microcalcification, an abnormality of small deposits of calcium on the same breast. "They made an incision on the area and found that it was the same cancer," she says. "Based on the measurements on my sampling, they decided that they didn't catch enough of the cancerous tissue. The recommendation was that I do a mastectomy."

At the same time, the surgeon suggested reconstructive breast surgery, a cosmetic procedure that is aimed at giving patients two balanced, symmetrical breasts. It usually occurs at the same time as the mastectomy, but patients can choose to have reconstructive surgery at a later date. Breast implants or the use of living tissue taken from another part of the patient's body are the two main methods of reconstruction. Patients also have the option of preserving the outside skin and nipple taken from their breasts during the mastectomy and using it in the reconstruction process. In Francis-Lawrence's case, the surgeon suggested that reconstructive surgery be performed at a later date, as there was a risk of the cancer being inside the skin. Ultimately, however, Francis-Lawrence decided on a double mastectomy without reconstructing her breasts.

"At the time, my decision not to do reconstruction was based on two things: First, it would have been costly. My concern was that if I dropped dead, I needed to make sure I left sufficient funds for my son. Then, I spoke to a friend who had gone through reconstruction. She was explaining the process they use for reconstruction after they remove all the tissue, like in my case, and I said, 'Hell no!'"

> "I decided not to go through the pain. I just ruled it out."

Francis-Lawrence's reaction is understandable. If a patient has all the breast tissue removed during the mastectomy, the surgeon inserts a bag under the flat skin (where the breasts used to be) and gradually fills the bag with saline, forcing the skin to stretch to accommodate the implant or tissue from another part of the body. "I decided not to go through the pain. I just ruled it out," she says.

Francis-Lawrence believes that the decision whether or not to undergo reconstructive surgery should be entirely up to the woman who faces both the risks and rewards. "It is an absolute personal decision," she says. "It didn't matter to me that I didn't have a physical breast. A prosthesis was good enough." But, she does admit there were repercussions to the double mastectomy. "I do (feel like less of a woman)," Francis-Lawrence says. "It's becoming less of an issue now because I'm no longer married. But when I was, it was always in the back of my head."

Despite the sensitive topic, Francis-Lawrence encourages women with breast cancer to talk to their partners before having any procedures. "I didn't factor my ex-husband into the decision to take my breasts off," she says. "I think I was a little selfish, but it's my body. I would tell women not to make a unilateral decision without your husband, have that discussion with him. But at the end of the day, it comes down to what you're most comfortable with."

Seven years later, Francis-Lawrence leads a healthier lifestyle and takes things of a medical nature one year at a time. Despite her health battles, Francis-Lawrence says that she believes she made the right choices and that the proof of her belief lies in one simple fact: "I'm still around."

photography MIHO TAKAYA

Taking matters into their own hands

North America's only health centre for and by women of colour, exceeds expectations

BY TRUE DALEY

There is only one place in North America that provides holistic healthcare for women of colour by women of colour. For the past 20 years, downtown Toronto's Women's Health in Women's Hands (WHIWH) has offered complete medical care, including counselling and therapy, to Black, Latino and South Asian women. With a mandate to serve the most marginalized population in an anti-oppressive environment, the services are free of charge, regardless of status in Canada or health coverage.

As it prepares for the unveiling of its newly renovated space, *Sway* sat down with WHIWH executive director of 13 years, Notisha Massaquoi, to discuss the phenomenal success of this unique facility.

Sway: Let's play devil's advocate: Why specifically women of colour? Do you ever get flak for that?

NOTISHA MASSAQUOI: Everyday I'll get a phone call from somebody complaining. They say we're practicing reverse discrimination and want to know what makes women of colour so unique. I always tell them that we're one of 76 community health centres in the province of Ontario, and each health centre has a unique population that it serves. Some are geographically based, so if I don't live in their area, I can't go there. That's not discrimination. It's providing a service for a particular population. There's a youth health centre, there's a francophone health centre, there's a refugee health centre, etc. We're completely funded by the Ministry of Health and the government has mandated this group of women to be high risk for certain illnesses and high risk for limited access to services.

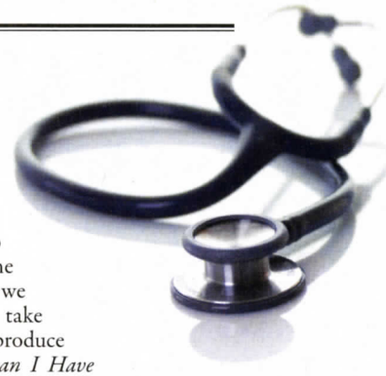
What are some of the specific health issues that women of colour face?

We're at high risk for all chronic illnesses. Black women, in particular, have the highest rates of HIV. We have the highest rates of diabetes, heart disease and hypertension, and the most aggressive forms of cancer that start much younger. It's not that we die more of breast cancer, it's that we're more likely not be diagnosed early. The Ontario Breast Cancer Screening program usually doesn't start screenings until you're over 45 or 50. In Black women, it's highly noted that our cancer starts much earlier.

Is there any research as to why that is?

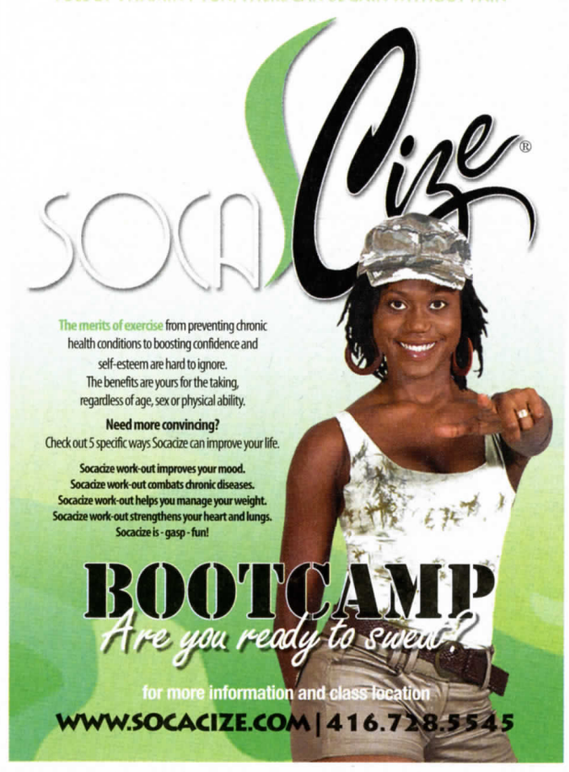
No. And, that's one of the other things that we have, a research department. We do some of the only research in the country on Black women and women of colour's health, specifically. We always produce a community report that's easily digestible and always use our research to influence policy. We've found that despite having mandatory HIV tests offered to all pregnant women in the province, over 65 per cent of all HIV positive babies in Ontario were born to Black women.

That's not necessarily because of the stereotypes that we're more promiscuous. Isn't it about not getting the diagnosis early?



Right, because at this stage of the HIV epidemic, they can reduce mother-to-child HIV transmission down to about one per cent. One of the best things that we did around HIV was take our research study and produce a movie called *The Woman I Have Become*, directed by Alison Duke. We used real women who are living with HIV to talk about their lives. We have 4,000 free DVDs and would love for people to come by and take several copies.

→ For more information, visit whiwh.com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LEAN ON ME

Two women share stories of supporting partners with prostate cancer BY LEROY GRAHAM

Chevelle Thomas didn't know what to think the day she found her husband, Mark, sitting in his home office, hours earlier than usual. She'd just returned from the grocery store, so Thomas called out for help with the bags. When he didn't respond, she knew something was wrong. "He was just sitting there, motionless," Thomas says. "I walked over, and he was crying. When he saw my shock he grabbed my hand, looked at me and said, 'I have cancer.' I instantly thought about our children and was just so scared thinking that my husband might die."

For months before the conversation, Thomas noticed changes in her husband's behaviour, such as him getting up in the middle of the night. "At first, I thought he was just getting up to work because a lot of his clients are international," she says. "Then, he began sleeping in another room and our intimacy level dropped almost to zero. A lot of things went through my mind but I didn't really say anything."

Maia George can relate to Thomas' story. After almost eight happy years of marriage, her relationship seemed to hit a sudden snag. She wondered what was happening, but chalked it up to the seven-year itch. "I figured after two kids and years of marriage, this was normal," she says. "We weren't having as much sex but I didn't really say anything. Then one day, after my husband had used the washroom, I noticed some blood in the toilet. I knew he wasn't cheating on me, so I confronted him and said, 'If you love your family, you will go to a doctor and get this checked out.'"

George was surprised to get a call from her husband several weeks later, asking if she could meet him at a doctor's office while he underwent some testing. She realized that this was her husband's way of reaching out for support. "A lot of the time, men put on a front of toughness about going to the doctor," she says. "What we, as partners, should realize is that they may just be afraid."

Ultimately, when the diagnosis of prostate cancer was confirmed, both women realized that communication would be the key in supporting their partners and strengthening their relationships. "Once we found out for sure, we began to talk and to research treatment options," says Thomas. "My husband is still going through treatments, but we understand what is going on, and we believe that he will be okay."

George and her husband were rattled. However, by communicating with each other leading up to the confirmation and then throughout the treatment process, the couple maintained a supportive relationship that continues to flourish years after their ordeal. "I really felt that it was up to me to be a sounding board and pillar of support," says George. "For those in the same situation, I would say the biggest thing is to communicate because your partner might not want to talk to anyone else. My husband didn't want to tell anyone. Even today, there are a lot of people who don't know what we've been through. But we made it, we love each other, and we're together. That's what is important."

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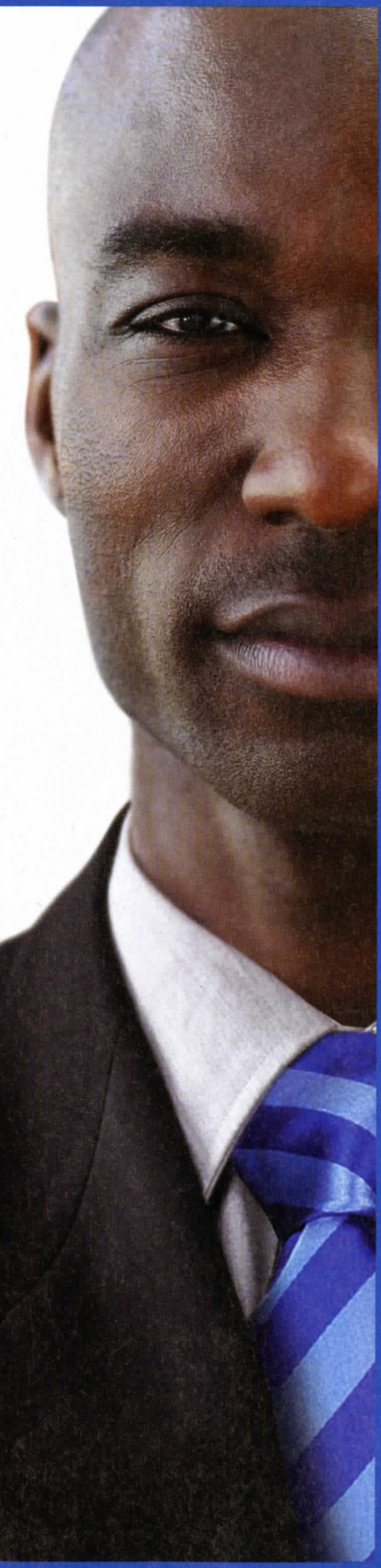

COUNTER INTELLIGENCE

Your makeup bag should be like your wardrobe: a carefully edited mix of investment pieces and budget-friendly basics. With tips from the pros, you can recreate three of fall's fabulous beauty looks without wasting a hard-earned penny. Plus, discover department and drug store essentials.

Photography ALEXIS FINCH
Makeup ROXANNE DENOBREGA
Beauty editor INGRIE WILLIAMS
Special thanks to Elite Models

ESSENTIALS
THE EXPERTS
SPLURGE ON

FLAWLESS CONCEALER

"With a good concealer, you can get away with not wearing foundation," says makeup artist Roxanne DeNobrega, who opts for MAKE UP FOR EVER HD Invisible Cover Concealer, $32. Elesia Stewart, a creative beauty consultant, likes Bobbi Brown Creamy Concealer, $32, because it doesn't make skin look ashy.

HIGH-QUALITY MAKEUP BRUSHES

"The Giorgio Armani Cosmetics Blender Brush, $52, is made of real hair and feels super soft on your skin," says Stewart, "and it doesn't streak the way others do." DeNobrega is loyal to M.A.C brushes. Some have lasted her 10 to 15 years!

LUXURY MASCARA

For Stewart, it's all about Chanel Inimitable Intense Mascara, $36. "It brings drama and intensity to the eyes," she says. "Every lash has a purpose!" To extend the look of short lashes, DeNobrega loves the magic wand of Dior DiorShow Mascara, $31.

ESSENTIALS
THE EXPERTS
SAVE ON

EYE AND LIP LINER PENCILS

"In the past few years, the inexpensive brands have upgraded their formulas and now offer better quality products that are softer and easy on the skin," says DeNobrega. Both she and Stewart are partial to the Annabelle collection, $8 each. "Their lip liners aren't too dry or too creamy," says Stewart, "and they don't have a tendency to break when you sharpen them."

LIP GLOSS

"I like Joe Fresh Style's range of colours," says DeNobrega, "and the packaging makes it look expensive when it really only costs $8." In Stewart's bag, you'll find Rimmel London Vinyl Bronze Lip Gloss, $9. "It has a nice lustre and texture, not too thick or tacky like other inexpensive glosses," she says.

ARTFULLY WINGED EYELINER

SPLURGE ON: Cream eye shadow. "Choose one with staying power and it won't move around," says DeNobrega. Put it in place with an angled brush, tracing the lash line in short streaks rather than attempting one continuous row. "Use only a bit of product to connect the lines."

HER PICK: MAKE UP FOR EVER Aqua Cream in Anthracite, $25.

SAVE ON: Loaded lashes. "With a mascara that amplifies length, curl and volume, it will look like you're wearing false lashes — without the hassle," says Stewart.

HER PICK: Maybelline Lash Stiletto Ultimate Length Mascara in Very Black, $12.

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MODEL CITIZEN

Meet Herieth Paul, the gorgeous girl on these pages who happens to be an up-and-coming catwalk queen. Born in Tanzania, Africa, and raised in Ottawa, Paul has recently been logging serious hours in NYC with runway bookings, cover shoots and spreads in well-known publications, such as *Glamour*. *Sway* caught up with her and learned that this beauty is more than just a pretty face.

Sway: What beauty products do you splurge and save on?
Herieth Paul: I don't wear make-up every day, but at certain times I like M.A.C foundation and CoverGirl LashBlast mascara.

What makes you feel beautiful?
It's not about being beautiful on the outside, it's about feeling beautiful on the inside by doing things I love — hanging out with friends, shopping, doing things that make me feel like me.

What runway shows would you love to be in?
Marc Jacobs because everything is so beautiful, and Victoria's Secret because the girls get to have fun. You can do your own thing: wave, blow a kiss, dance and get the crowd smiling.

What magazine covers do you dream of being on?
American Vogue, *Flare* and *Vanity Fair*.

GLOSSY GOLDEN EYE SHADOW

SPLURGE ON: A three-in-one bronzing stick. "You can use it on eyes, lips and face." Pat it on lids and brow bones (avoiding the crease), tops of cheekbones and all over lips.

HER PICK: NARS The Multiple in Palm Beach, $46.

SAVE ON: A lacquered finish for your lids. "You just need a touch of gloss on the lids and brow bones. A little goes a long way," says DeNobrega. Don't forget to add a dab on your lips.

HER PICK: Joe Fresh Beauty Lip Gloss in Clear, $8.

TRANSFORM | beauty

BOLD LIPS

BLACKBERRY

SPLURGE ON: Lip colour. The deep lip colour is the star of this look. "Investing in a rich shade that's creamy and long-lasting is always worth it," says DeNobrega.

HER PICK: Lancôme French Touch Absolu in Cherry Kiki, $40.

SAVE ON: An eyebrow pencil. Strong brows play an important supporting role, so use a brow pencil to create bolder brows by filling in where hair is sparse, says Stewart.

HER PICK: Annabelle Eyebrow Pencil in Black, $8.

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BEAUTY and the *Babe*

The struggle to maintain a beauty routine with the demands of a newborn

AS TOLD TO SIMONA SIAD

My name is Candice Menzies. I'm a 26-year-old social worker, and I recently gave birth to my son Kayson. Beauty-wise, before the baby, my motto used to be: If you look good, you will feel good. I truly walked that walk. My hair was always important and I would get it done at least once a month. I was also all about following the latest makeup trends. I usually kept it pretty simple and natural during the day, but I loved playing with dramatic makeup when I went out. You know, fake eyelashes, bright shadows and bold lipsticks — the works! I will admit, I was pretty high maintenance. Getting ready would take at least two and a half hours. I didn't like to rush beauty. And then I had my son.

Don't get me wrong, I love my child. Having him has been the greatest blessing in my life. But when I gave birth to Kayson, I quickly realized that my needs come last. For the last five months, my baby has come first, then the household chores and then, finally, me. It seems like time goes by so fast. Honestly, if I can accomplish one thing a day on my list (besides taking care of Kayson), I feel so proud.

My beauty routine consists of doing things in painful, spread-out steps. Simple things like showering, putting on makeup and even brushing my teeth often feel like luxurious treatments. And, don't get me started on my toes! I keep making appointments to get a pedicure but I never seem to get there. The hardest part is that I just haven't felt the same. I haven't felt sexy or glamorous. You know how they say a picture tells a thousand words? The day I got home from the hospital, I realized I wasn't in any of the photographs with my baby. My little sisters took some photos and started giggling, uncontrollably. I saw the photos and gasped in horror. Half of my hair was standing upright like a crooked bird's nest! OK, I didn't expect my hair to look amazing after giving birth, but I didn't realize it looked that bad. I think that was the exact moment that I realized my life had changed drastically. I really began to feel afraid that I was going to lose myself forever.

But things are slowly getting better. I recently splurged on a new line of skin care products. It feels good to feel pampered again. My goal is to try to get a massage once a month and I also plan on trying hot yoga. Beauty starts from within so I want to take care of myself and find a balance. I wouldn't trade Kayson for the world and motherhood has been the most amazing experience. Through taking care of him, I have been learning more about myself. I am slowly turning into the person I've always been striving to become. He has actually made me a better person, a more beautiful person. Now ... if only I could find time to get that pedicure!

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MOMMY MAKEUP BAG

MUST-HAVES TO ENHANCE YOUR POST-BABY BEAUTY

1 Cleansing cloths
Even with a bedtime routine that includes a little one, it is important to remember to cleanse your face before going to sleep to prevent clogged pores and breakouts. To get the task done quickly, use pre-moistened facial cleansing wipes — no water needed!

2 A light moisturizer
New moms often complain about dry skin. As it turns out, post-delivery hormones can be the cause of your dehydrated skin, breakouts, and ruddiness. Look for sensitive skin or fragrance-free formulas and natural ingredients to soothe skin.

3 Blush and bronzer
Bring back your mom-to-be glow with a combo of sheer blush followed by a bronzer. Used together, they provide a healthy flush with subtle radiance. Apply both lightly; a gentle swipe on the apples of your cheeks will do the trick.

4 A healthy lip balm
You're likely kissing your baby hundreds of times a day, thus transferring lip products onto him or her. Delicate infant skin can be easily irritated. Avoid pigmentation, heavy gloss, tea tree oil, menthol, cinnamon or other heat–inducing additives found in some lip enhancers.

5 Magic mascara
If you can only manage to put on one item of makeup, make it mascara. It's like eight hours of sleep in a tube. Choose a waterproof formula and apply two light coats.

Compiled by Simona Siad with files from 21Months.com, the no-nonsense resource for new parents.

Vintage Diva

TIKA SIMONE, host, MC + actor

Stats: Age 24, Size 16

Her style: Old school glam. I'm not afraid to try something different or new. It's rare for a larger female to want to try some of the things I like to try.

Inspired by: Grace Jones. I'm obsessed with her and with what she represents. I love Sophia Loren and the way she just held her own. She was voluptuous in a time when it was not really embraced. I like what Rihanna wears because it just works for her. I love the leggings and how bold she is.

Her body image obstacles: I'm not the biggest fan of my arms. I would appreciate them if they were much smaller. That being said, my family has never made me feel self-conscious about my weight. I've always tried to stay healthy. I'm very active.

On confidence: I get my confidence from my grandmother. She taught me how to be a lady. You would never catch her out without a Chanel suit and pearls, and she never left the house without her compact. She was regal, beautiful and completely divine. I drew a lot of confidence and life lessons from her.

On changes in the fashion industry: I don't think the industry has changed completely, but there is acknowledgment of issues like anorexia and the need for full-figured models. I appreciate that. Women come in all sizes — we have shape, curves, breasts, bums, thighs, arms and tummies. If you are a designer, you need to understand these things, especially if you are making clothes for women. It would be great to come to a place where we have full-figured women walking in fashion lines like Michael Kors and Armani.

Shopping tips: Don't be so closed-minded. Even if you look at something and it looks bizarre, try it on. You never know. It's all about your shape. I also like to go shopping with a polished look and my hair done so I can grasp what the whole outfit will look like when I'm ready to go out. Come correct or don't come at all!

Secret style weapon: I always have to have earrings on, I feel naked without them. It's my one fashion staple. I will even wear brooches as earrings. I love bold jewellery.

Loves fashion because: It can be anything you want it to be. As long as you know yourself and who you are, fashion will mould to you. That's all that matters.

Real women, real style

FIVE FASHION LOVERS CELEBRATE THEIR BODIES, THEIR CONFIDENCE AND THEIR FIERCE SENSE OF STYLE

BY SIMONA SIAD

THE FASHION WORLD'S strict limits on the size of chic are slowly changing. Recently, plus-size models have appeared in mainstream magazines such as *Glamour, French Marie Claire* and *Italian Vogue*. Mega-star Queen Latifah has become a CoverGirl model. And retail brands such as City Chic, Faith 21, Evans UK and Torrid are starting to offer high fashion looks for larger sizes.

As it turns out, real women (a.k.a. the majority of us) are tired of being told to wear black, diet and hide in the back of the fashion closet. They're eager to buy stylish clothes and cosmetics from companies who will cater to them. And the companies are starting to listen and, more importantly, respond. Money talks whether you're a size four or 14. But this shift isn't just about being able to buy the latest dress style in your size. It's about social embracement and acceptance of our multitude of shapes. Here, a few fearlessly fashionable women show you how it's done.

Photography DARREN GOLDSTEIN

Special thanks to Harlem Underground Restaurant

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Style Maven

YOULANDA JACKSON, wardrobe stylist
Stats: Age 35, Size 16

Her style: Funky and trendsetting. I don't really follow any trends, so a lot of the things I wear get a lot of attention. I also do a lot of things that people are reluctant to do. I dress to my mood.

Inspired by: I draw a lot of inspiration from art, colour and interesting shapes. That is also what I like about fashion: It is very artful. I like statement pieces.

Her body image obstacles: I always worked with what I had. I've never had any problems showing my arms, my legs or my back. When I was younger, I didn't like my feet because I have long toes! But as I got older, I realized what colour worked well on my feet and I just made it work. Now, it's open-toe shoes galore. I love my toes!

On confidence: I realized there are some things in life you just can't change. It doesn't make sense to harp over it. Can I really cut off my toes? I can't! I really love fashion and I love shoes. So to think that I'm not going to embark on a beautiful strappy sandal because of my feet, I just couldn't do that. Plus, I have a really amazing family and friends who support my love of fashion. That gives me the confidence to try something new because I don't have to worry about them saying anything negative to me.

Thoughts on the fashion industry: Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but unfortunately the powers that be in the fashion world have decided that beautiful isn't what the majority of women are. It's not what the majority of Black women are. I think style is equal to individualism. Everyone's style is different. It is unfortunate that the fashion industry is so narrow-minded on the incredible broad spectrum of beauty.

Shopping tips: Don't try to be someone else. Stay comfortable and make sure of a proper fit. Also, don't be afraid of colour. There is nothing worse than seeing a woman in something she is not comfortable in. Confidence is everything.

Secret style weapon: My jewellery and accessories. When I'm on set, working 12 to 15 hours a day, high fashion clothes do not always work. But if I'm dressed comfortably, I can always add great accessories. Whenever I am out, someone always stops me and comments on my glasses, my watch or my earrings. Accessories can make a plain outfit amazing.

Loves fashion because: It's all about individualism. I love when people can express who they are in their clothing and carry it off in a confident manner. To me, that is what fashion and style truly is.

Global Chic

BELINDA BARROCKS, photographer
Stats: Age 30, Size 8-10

Her style: Out of the box. I have a really unique background, so I try to make my style edgy and unique.

Inspired by: Culture. I like to wear things from different cultures and people. I get the opportunity to travel a lot, and I love to pull from different things that I see.

Her body image obstacles: As a teenager, I started to develop hips. I didn't know how to appreciate them because most of my friends didn't have hips. I wore baggy pants and shirts because I wanted to hide them. I'm comfortable with my body now but it took me a while to figure it out. I realized I needed to choose between either drowning myself with clothing or accentuating my hips with fashion.

On confidence: I stopped dressing for other people. When I started to dress for myself and appreciate what I saw in the mirror, everything changed. By accepting my body shape and buying the right type of clothing, I found that I started to love looking at myself in the mirror.

On changes in the fashion industry: I feel not many women can wear most of the high-fashion clothes that come out. Many of the styles in Europe are catered to a certain type of shape. Not everyone in North America can wear European fashions. I love to look at magazines but then I take that and make it my own.

Shopping tips: Once you know what shape you are and what type of clothing you are comfortable wearing, embrace and love who you are. Consider doing a closet revamp, maybe you need a complete change. Bring a stylish friend to give you a second opinion. Oh, and try on clothing in the store! You need to know how it will look on you.

Secret style weapon: I love vests. They bring in my waist. I buy different colours and styles. A big part of my shape is embracing each angle of me. The vests change any look. They tailor a look without being obvious. I keep a vest or blazer in the car at all times!

Loves fashion because: It is what makes me who I am — my character, my enthusiasm.

Colourful and Caribbean

DARLING NICKY, entertainment writer/reporter
Stats: Age 34, Size 10-12

Her style: I am practical with my style and cut, and experimental with colour. You will not see me attempt a bare midriff (I am a mother of two) or super short shorts. I like flattering dresses in either bold solid colours with a little bit of jewellery or a colourful pattern with minimal jewellery.

Inspired by: Halle Berry. I really admire her great awareness of what looks best on her. She knows the fashion formula. Another inspiration would be Beyoncé. She's very curvy, as am I. She knows her body and takes risks with colour.

Her body image obstacles: I grew up in an all white neighborhood, where my beauty was not appreciated by most. I have this painful memory of being in Grade 6 and having the cutest and most popular boy in the entire school tease me because my thighs were comparably thicker than all my white friends.

On confidence: My confidence to pull off my looks is about being myself. I wear my inner attitude on the outside. So if you know me, I believe it is very transparent that my wardrobe and my personality are in direct correlation.

On changes in the fashion industry: We have seen a huge shift in North America regarding whom we identify as fashion icons. Kim Kardashian: curvy. Scarlett Johansson: curvy too. Mary J. Blige: yep, curvy. And Queen Latifah: very curvy. They're all now influencing the beauty and fashion industries, which bodes well for the majority of us.

Shopping tips: When you find something that flatters your body shape, buy more than one! Get it in a base colour, and get it in a bold one. You can double your wardrobe, with half the headache.

Secret style weapon: I rock with a flower in my hair everywhere I go! I am highly inspired by my Caribbean background, and island girls tend to embrace a bold colour palette.

Loves fashion because: It is a declaration of who I am and what I am feeling. When I wear spring colours or floral prints, it's because I feel fresh and energetic. When I wear denim with studded shirts and belts, I'm probably feeling a little edgy. When I like what I am wearing, I'm ready for whatever the day has to offer.

SWAYMAG.CA/SUBSCRIBE

Comfort and Curves

KEISHA FRANCIS, non-profit director
Stats: Age 24, Size 8

Her style: Colour and comfort. I love wearing jeans and a T-shirt, but I also love throwing on a dress. With everything I do, I love experimenting with colour.

Inspired by: Tyra Banks. I love her and her sense of fearless style. She's willing to try out different types of looks even though she is curvy. She is not afraid to show her true personality with whatever she wears.

Her body image obstacles: My hips. I am really curvy. Even if I lose 100 lbs., I will always have curvy hips. I grew up around really thin girls, so no one else had curves like me. For years, I thought I was too fat because there was no one else like me. Accepting my curves was probably the biggest obstacle for me. It's something I am still getting used to, but I am slowly coming into my own.

On confidence: Moving to Toronto, I started to see more women who have curves. It was great, people were embracing their curves and people appreciated that. It was around that time that I started feeling better about myself.

On changes in the fashion industry: It all starts somewhere, whether it's someone like Tyra Banks speaking out about her size or an ad campaign like Dove. All it takes is one magazine, one person to say, 'Hey, maybe we should change our perspective on this beauty issue and include real people.' It makes sense because the people who are reading the magazines and buying the clothes are real people! We want to see models included who are beautiful, real and who look just like us.

Shopping tips: If you're curvy, finding a pair of jeans is the hardest thing in the world. My advice when jean shopping is to give yourself a lot of time. Try on lots of jeans, and do not get discouraged. Sometimes I will try on 100 pairs of jeans, or so it feels! Do not dismay, you will find a pair that finally fits.

Secret style weapon: A vintage wrap dress I got from Queen Street. It accentuates my chest, ties in my waist and flows off my hips. Every time I wear that dress, I get a thousand compliments.

Loves fashion because: It can be a reflection of whom you are inside. You should always wear the clothes and never let the clothes wear you.

ahead of the Curve(s)

Girls, it's time to celebrate! The season's best trends are made for real women, with real figures. Our stunning model (and working mom), Shakira, shows you how to wear the must-have skirts that hug your hips, lace that plays peek-a-boo and coats that sashay down the street with you. This fall, every shape can look chic. Here's to being big, bold and beautiful.

Photography ALVARO GOVEIA
Styling TRICIA CAMPBELL HALL, FORDARTISTS.COM
Makeup DAVID GOVEIA, JUDYINC.COM
Hair ADRIAN CAREW, HAIR2INC.
Fashion editor INGRIE WILLIAMS
Special thanks to Ford Models

THE TREND: ANIMAL PRINT

This is paws-itively the "it" print for fall. Here, ruffles sweeten an attention-demanding top, while the tailored pencil skirt keeps everything in check. Want to dabble in this trendy graphic but prefer to make a quieter style statement? There'll be a zoo of shoes, bags, belts and hats swathed in animal print from which to choose.

Button-front blouse, $345, Love Moschino, at Magnolia, 416-825-4501. High-waisted skirt, $30, Attitude, and reptile embossed belt, $9, Jessica, both at Sears, sears.ca. Leather and linen envelope clutch, $275, Fullum & Holt, fullumboutique.com.

Beauty note: Forget about pale pastels or inky gothic hues, the most coveted nail colour for fall is a warm shade of grey. Joe Fresh Style Nail Polish in Fog, ($4, joe.ca) is understated, yet edgy, all at once.

THE TREND: A CAMEL COAT

Grab one! Now! This prepster classic is making a huge comeback, and has been re-imagined in every possible way. We like this one for its laidback, sexy, slouchy shape. Throw it on over anything you already own. Isn't it nice to know you can be au courant with just one piece?

Two-pocket coat with trim, $179, H&M, hm.com. V-neck sweater tunic, $90, Esprit, esprit.com. Leather lace-up heeled clogs, $110, ALDO, aldoshoes.com.

THE TREND: FLARED LEG TROUSERS

These are hands-down the most flattering pair of pants you'll put on this fall. Look for a fit that skims over hips and thighs and slightly flares towards the cuff. Wearing them with something sultry, like a lace tank top, will keep you in touch with your feminine side.

Flared leg pants, $90, and sequin belt, $30, Esprit, esprit.com. Waterfall vest, $225, Designers Remix Collection at Magnolia, 416-825-4501. Cloche hat, $30, Jessica, and lace tank top, $25, Attitude, both at Sears, sears.ca. Platform heels, $110, ALDO, aldoshoes.com.

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THE TREND: A LONG SKIRT

Having swished down every major runway, floor-grazing skirts are no longer just for wedding or ball gowns. It's official: Maxi lengths are suitable for daytime display. It's best to stick to tailored pieces on top, what with all that fabric down below. Anything fitted, whether a lightweight knit or a tough-looking jacket, will do just fine. Striped long skirt, $35, H&M, hm.com. Cropped leather jacket, $499, Danier, danier.com. Opaque tights, Secret, $8, secretlegwear.com. Knuckle duster ring, $15 ALDO, aldoshoes.com.

THE TREND: THE CAPE

No cable knit, pom-pom dripping Boho numbers here. Fall's best — and most wearable — cape offerings come in strong colours and cut an equally strong silhouette. Pair one with sleek shapes and polished accessories, like high-heeled oxfords.

Belted cape, $345, Lola & Gigi, lolaandgigi.com. Mini dress, $120, Esprit, esprit.com. Leather high heels, $90, ALDO, aldoshoes.com.

THE TREND: LACE

How do you make a Victorian era fabric look modern? A plunging neckline, fitted bodice and see-through sleeves help, and they keep this lace frock from coming anywhere near grandma territory. The oversized floral design needs only a solitary piece of jewellery to keep it company.

Long sleeve dress, $225, Kiyonna at Lola & Gigi, lolaandgigi.com. Multi-strand chain link and bead bracelet, $45, Banana Republic, bananarepublic.ca.

SWAYMAG.CA/SUBSCRIBE

A *fine* balance

A hospitality endeavour brings new challenges and rewards for one mother-daughter team

BY STEPHANIE POLLARD

Rozz Entertainment Complex Centre has a restaurant, a banquet hall and a performance venue all under one roof. The brand new business on 200 Advance Blvd. in Brampton, Ontario is the brainchild of mother-daughter team Rosalind Blake-Sutherland and Tanika Blake. And with the help of partners Lloyd Blake and Leo Sinclair, the pair aims to make its dream of offering affordable luxury a long-lasting reality. "For a long time, I wanted to get into the entertainment field," says Blake-Sutherland. "I was always having little things going on like fashion shows or dinners. I had this dream that I would have a place that offers up nice Caribbean fusion in an entertainment complex where we could have R&B, reggae and jazz artists." With her business partners, Blake-Sutherland created the concept for Rozz in 2008, but it didn't materialize until this past summer, when the doors finally swung open.

A versatile concept isn't the only part of this hospitality equation. As Blake-Sutherland and Blake work to balance the mother-daughter and employer-employee bond, both are finding that their relationship has become deeper as well as more complicated. "I find it really hard separating employer from mother," Blake says of the arrangement. "Sometimes it doesn't matter what she's telling me, even when I'm in the workplace and it's related to work, it's almost like, 'Mom is not happy with what I've done.'" For her part, Blake-Sutherland admits that because she depends on Blake for so much, her expectations tend to be extremely high. "Sometimes I think she tries too hard to please me, I really do," she says.

Grievances aside, this mother-daughter team is constantly working to ensure that Rozz upholds its reputation of providing quality entertainment while giving back to the community through scholarships and other endeavours.

With business starting to boom, Blake-Sutherland and her daughter are confident this entertainment haven will be offering the royal treatment for years to come. "I see Rozz having about 10 different locations," Blake-Sutherland says. Blake finishes her mom's thoughts: "Also, what we have here are different components of business in one area so it would be great to see a Rozz banquet hall by itself or a Rozz restaurant by itself. That would be really great."

→ For more information on Rozz Entertainment, visit rozzentertainment.com

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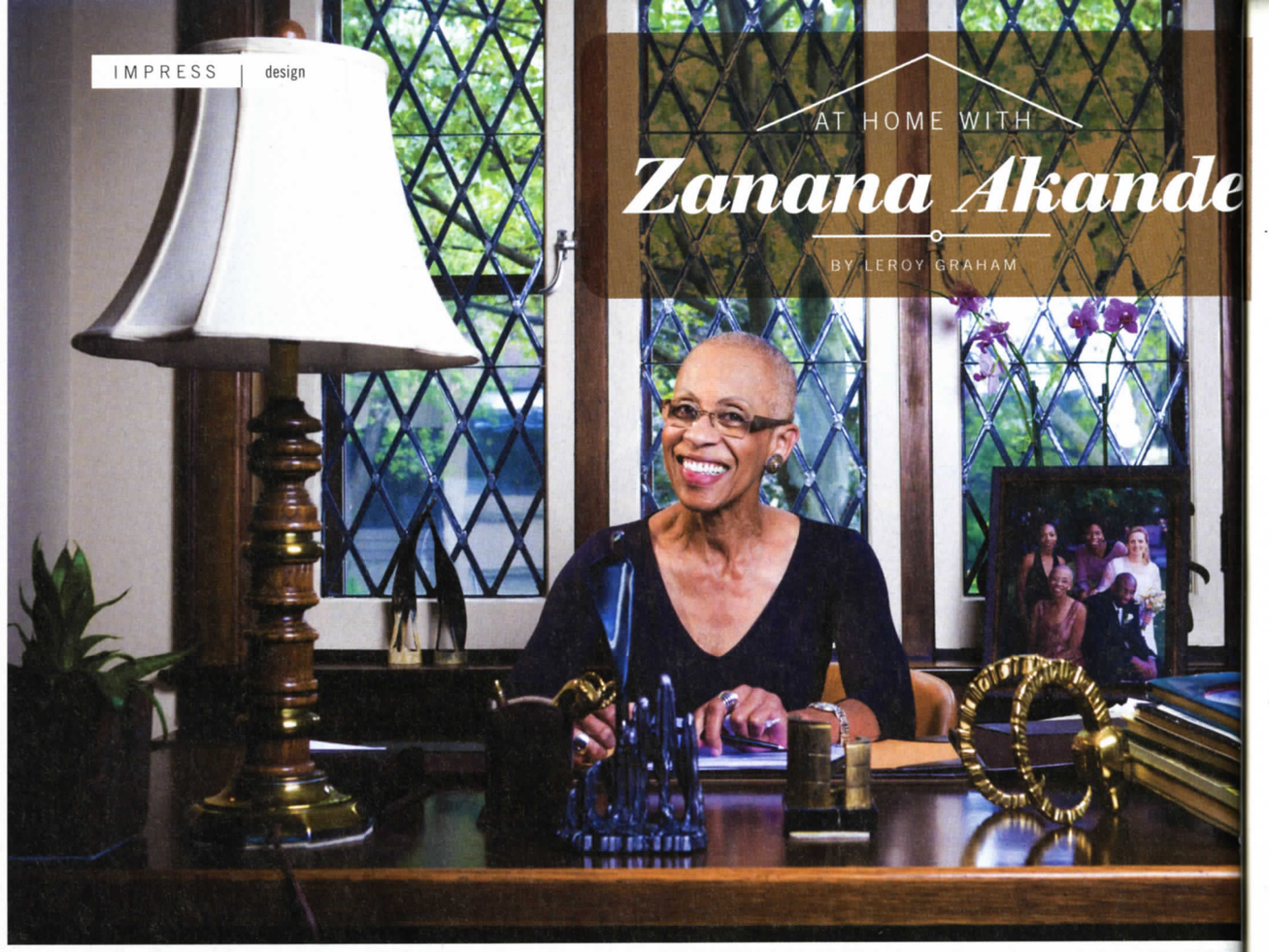
AT HOME WITH

Zanana Akande

BY LEROY GRAHAM



Zanana Akande has always liked the idea of being a groundbreaker. It's one of the reasons she entered provincial politics, becoming the first Black woman to win a seat in Ontario's provincial parliament. It's also why, in 1975, she had no qualms about moving into Toronto's exclusive Forest Hill neighbourhood. "I was pregnant," says Akande. "We either had to extend the house that we were in or find something larger. We looked at this house and the one next door. I like Tudor houses and I can always pick one out. I remember when I came in and went through the house, I liked the style and spaciousness of it."

Akande and her late husband, Isaac, decided to purchase the home, located in the mostly Jewish enclave. Although the arrival of the family was generally well received by neighbours and the community, being one of the few Black residents in the area did come with its share of issues. First, the Black community questioned why the Akandes moved into the almost all-Jewish neighbourhood. Secondly, Forest Hill homeowners wondered how a Black family might change the complexion of the area. The Akandes' response to all of the back and forth was simple: "Let's just say we moved in and didn't really care," she says with a laugh. "I wasn't really looking for an experience and hadn't anticipated one. However, there were comments. One day, a child came up to my son while he was playing on the driveway and said, 'You can't live here. Does your mother work here?' I wondered if I was going to get any more of those comments when they went off to school."

Little did Akande know that a few negative experiences would galvanize her neighbours to advocate on behalf of her family, insisting that they be treated with the same courtesies afforded to any other Forest Hill resident. "I had mentioned what happened, in passing, to my gynaecologist, who lived in the area, as well as to a woman who worked at the school where I was a consultant. They didn't like the sound of those comments and I don't know what happened, but comments just stopped. The kids made friends, we made friends, and everyone was just fine," she says.

The beautiful Tudor home that Akande fell in love with in 1975 has seen its share of tragedy and triumph. Events of the early 1990s are of particular note for Akande, who recalls her political gain and personal loss: "I remember winning the election. I was surprised because I didn't think I would win. But after being elected, I remember long nights working in the house. We would get the kids settled then my husband would do his work and I would do mine. We'd meet for coffee in the kitchen, sometimes at 2 a.m.," she says. "Almost a year and three months after I was elected, my husband died. He died six weeks after cancer had been diagnosed. Three days before he died, there was a dinner for Isaac and I. There were hundreds of people there and they presented us with some of the beautiful pictures hanging in my home."

"I think I've earned the right to live in comfort. I hope that doesn't sound arrogant or selfish, but that's the way I feel."

— Zanana Akande

Having navigated politics, personal loss and a successful professional career, Akande is now happy to spend her well-deserved free time enjoying life as a grandmother. "We're city people. My children live nearby and are here quite often. I'm quite comfortable here, and I think I've earned the right to live in comfort," she says with a laugh. "I hope that doesn't sound arrogant or selfish, but that's the way I feel. I don't see any need to leave this house. Sometimes we're more loyal to what we've said than to what we feel, so I reserve the right to change my mind. But at this point, I don't think I will."

PHOTOGRAPHY **DARREN GOLDSTEIN**

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Painting her way to activism

AT JUST 18, CAMILLE GORDON IS CREATIVELY MAKING AN IMPACT

BY TAKARA SMALL

If she wanted them to, Camille Gordon's words could move mountains. The 18-year-old high school student doesn't sound like your typical teenager. Instead of boys and celebrity gossip, her conversation is peppered with inspirational phrases like "nothing worth doing is easy" and talk of volunteer work that will see her well into old age. She also tends to shy away from self-praise. "I was always so busy during school that I missed out on a lot of social events," she says. "I don't want to blow off my friends, but helping others is obviously more important."

The Brampton, Ontario native is an active volunteer in her community and has amassed dozens of accolades for her work. But Gordon doesn't believe the word 'activist' — which has been heaped on her for volunteer work such as sandwich runs for the homeless — is best suited to describe her. "You have to sacrifice a lot if you're going to be an activist," she says. "I don't feel like I've sacrificed a lot. Time, yeah, but that's it. In the future, I'd like to be an activist. But right now, I don't think I've lived up to that name."

If Gordon isn't an activist yet, her newest endeavour has her well on her way to becoming one. Gordon, along with fellow students from St. Augustine Secondary School, created a series of small-sized canvases emblazoned with artwork that were sold to raise money for charity and captured the attention of many admirers, including the media. The success that Gordon is experiencing did not come as a shock to her cousin Allison England. "I wasn't surprised," England says. "She cares more about everything else than she does about herself. As long as I can remember, she's been doing intercommunity work."

The inspiration behind her recent attention-grabbing idea started six months ago when Gordon applied for a government grant called SpeakUp. She used her award money to make the inspirational paintings that raised twice the amount of the initial grant. "I always have new ideas," she says. "It's great that the government provides ways for youth to get involved and help the community. I will be applying for more grants."

It was Gordon's painting of a woman rowing into obscurity away from an abusive situation, with baby in tow, that recieved the most attention. The piece will be sold to help Gordon pay her tuition costs at the Ontario College of Art & Design.

photography DARREN GOLDSTEIN

The *right* exposure

A new website turns an urban eye to what's hot in T Dot

BY GEENA LEE

You may have seen them at a concert or a cultural event. One is usually holding a video camera, the other a microphone. Both wear bright smiles and hot pink T-shirts. Nicole 'Nikki' Morgan and Laurel O'Neil are a dynamic duo determined to focus the "urban eye on what's hot in the T Dot." Launched this spring, T Dot Exposed is a website dedicated to all things Toronto, featuring "webisodes" that highlight people, places and events of interest to visitors and locals alike.

> "That's what T Dot Exposed is about, exposing exciting and fun stuff to do around the city."
>
> — Nicole Morgan, co-creator of website T Dot Exposed

Laurel O'Neil (l) and Nicole 'Nikki' Morgan

The partnership between O'Neil and Morgan stems from a friendship that goes back to high school. They both also attended York University, where O'Neil got a degree in film and video production while Morgan attained hers in sociology and went on to get a diploma in multimedia design at Humber College. As O'Neil moved to New York to pursue a career in film and television, Morgan discovered her "gift of gab" as an on-air personality at CHRY 105.5FM. "I really enjoyed interviewing and getting to know people," says Morgan of her start in media. Over the years the friends kept in touch, often discussing possibilities of creating their own opportunities together. O'Neil remembers: "We used to talk on the phone and Nikki would say, 'Whenever you come back to Toronto we should do something in film.'"

That opportunity presented itself when O'Neil relocated back to T.O., and she realized there are so many events in the city that people aren't aware of. "I thought, not everyone is able to get out to these festivals and parties, but it'd be nice to have something on the web for them to see what they missed," she says. "I said, 'Why don't we get a camera and make a show?'" With Morgan as the main host, T Dot Exposed gives viewers the scoop on a wide range of entertainment, dispelling any myths that there isn't much to do in the city. "It's not true," O'Neil says. "In our first webisode, we featured the top three places to take a date. We had quite a few people respond who didn't know these businesses existed, and wanted to check them out." Morgan adds: "That's what T Dot Exposed is about, exposing exciting and fun stuff to do around the city." Looking to expand its scope, T Dot Exposed is set to feature a new reality series about dating in Toronto. "It will be very multicultural, featuring women as the main characters," says O'Neil.

Although still relatively new to the web entertainment industry, the ladies are hitting their stride and getting positive feedback. Morgan believes it's the quality of their work that stands out. "Most people just flip up a video on YouTube from their camera phone," she says, "whereas we shoot in HD and professionally edit our footage. It's a show."

→ For information about internship opportunities or contributing to the site, email info@tdotexposed.com

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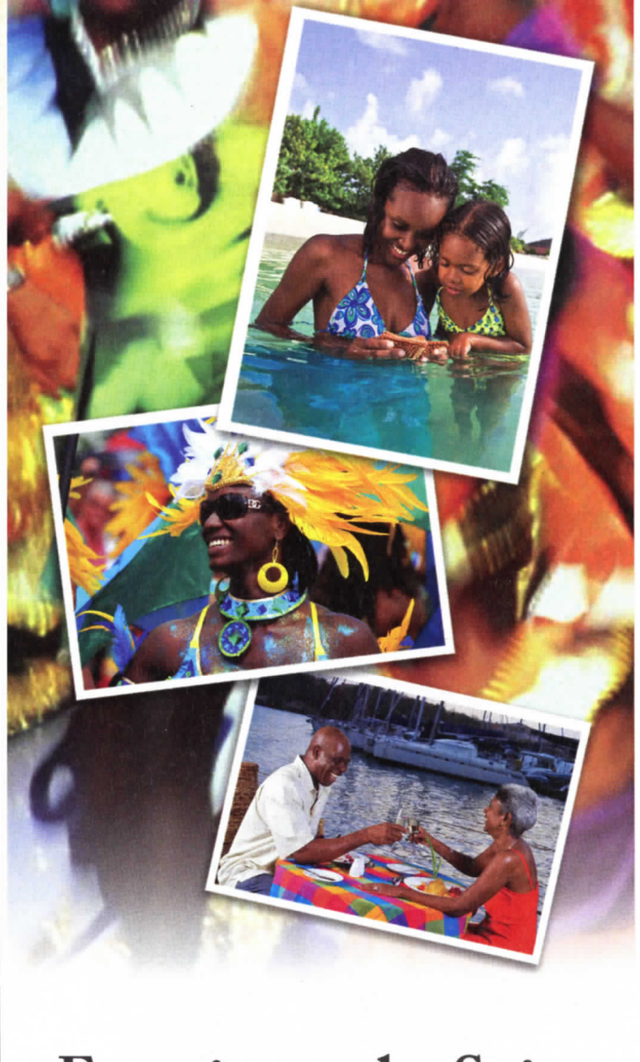

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CARIBBEAN

After half a century, the Congress of Black Women of Canada remains united in its goals BY STEPHANIE POLLARD

50 years of support

Loris Thomas

Two important factors in being successful are education and support. For more than 50 years, the Congress of Black Women of Canada has fiercely advocated for both, with its mandate to provide a forum for Black women to improve their lives and identify issues that affect them, their families and the entire community.

Former regional representative of Ontario Ettie Rutherford remembers how important support was when she immigrated to Alberta from Jamaica with her husband, who would eventually abandon her and their four young children. She first attended a conference of the Congress in Vancouver, at which 200 Black women were present. "I thought I'd died and gone to heaven," she says, "because in Calgary more than 20 years ago, how many Black women did you see?"

> "I know information is power, and all of us need to become more powerful"
> — Ettie Rutherford, Congress of Black Women member

At the time, Rutherford was one of the few Black teachers who came to Alberta from the Caribbean. With support from the Congress, she went on to earn her bachelor and then masters in education. But it was also the harsh realities of racism along with the desire to assist Black women with education, child development, health, housing, pension and sexism that fuelled her passion to work with the Congress. "Every one of those areas is the bedrock of life, regardless of whether you're Black or not," she says. "I know information is power, and all of us need to become more powerful."

Today, the Congress continues to be influential, providing resources such as scholarships, counselling and mentoring programs. Loris Thomas is the regional representative of the Ontario chapter and former president of the Mississauga chapter. She joined the Congress in 1999 because of its sense of community. "[When I first joined], brunch was not being catered," she remembers of her first experience with the organization. "But these women would get together and one would make the chicken, one would make the rice, one would make the fish ... that community spirit was at work. We work very well together."

Working together has helped the Congress to remain a cohesive unit that is always open to new members — even the ones that may not yet know about it. Thomas says she's unsure why many Black women are unaware that the Congress exists, but it doesn't deter her. "I struggle with that," she says. "But I think when there's something going on and they need us, they will certainly find us."

Thomas has 50 years worth of evidence to back her up.

→ For more information on the Congress of Black Women of Canada and to find your local chapter, visit cbwc-ontario.org

Meeting of the MINDS

BY PAULA A. MORRISON

Staying ahead of the curve is what keeps communities on top of their game. And with the help of the Black Business and Professional Association (BBPA), students, entrepreneurs and others can realize both economic and academic success.

One of the ways BBPA is making that happen is through its involvement in organizing landmark events like the National Black Business and Professional Conference, taking place November 4 to 5 at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto. The first of its kind, the event is perfect for entrepreneurs and other Black businesses in Canada, as it aims to introduce attendees to best practices and out-of-the-box thinking to help them move their businesses forward. "To remain successful, businesses need to be flexible and have new ideas to keep their customers engaged," says Pauline Christian, BBPA president. "This professional conference will bring together some of the best minds in business so that we can share and learn from each other, and with that, become even better and more competitive Black business people." Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from key business leaders. Invited guests include Jim Flaherty, MPP, finance minister and minister responsible for the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Later in the month, on Nov. 25, more than 250 high school students from priority neighbourhoods across the GTA will participate in the annual BBPA National Scholarship Fund Leaders of Tomorrow Conference. It is a unique one-day educational event with a goal to provide students with the tools necessary to achieve both personal and professional success. Topping off the day, more than 45 gifted and community-minded Black students will be recognized at a presentation ceremony. Since its inception in 1986, the BBPA National Scholarship Fund has awarded more than $5-million to more than 500 deserving students. Its programs have given many of Canada's Black youth an opportunity to be successful and help to level the academic playing field.

For more than two decades, the BBPA has been an organization that listens and responds to the business and educational needs of Black communities. With creative tools, services and programs designed to challenge and motivate its members, the organization continues to provide value.

→ Early bird registration for the National Black Business and Professional Conference is available at nbbpc.eventbrite.com. Donations to the BBPA National Scholarship Fund can be made by visting bbpa.org.

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celebrating roots with *passion*

BY KIM ENGLAND

Angela White (l) (RBC) presents President's Award to Frances Lankin (United Way Greater Toronto)

Friends and supporters of Tropicana Community Services recently enjoyed a rousing evening of entertainment, gifts and fantastic food in celebration of the agency's 17th Annual Caribbean Ball. The capacity crowd of 400 also listened to an electrifying keynote address by Dr. Carl Mack, executive director of the National Society for Black Engineers (NSBE), in which he encouraged the Black community to put aside apathy and embrace the passion of the work at Tropicana.

For 30 years, Tropicana has provided youth, newcomers, people of Black and Caribbean heritage, and others in need, with opportunities and alternatives that lead to success and positive life choices. The agency offers culturally appropriate programs such as counselling, childcare, educational and employment services as well as youth development — often at no or low cost. Last year, Tropicana's programs and services assisted more than 13,000.

Also during the gala, important awards were presented. These honours included: the President's Award to Frances Lankin, president and CEO of United Way Toronto; the Community Builder Award to Hamlin Grange, president and co-founder of DiversiPro Inc.; and the Founder's Award to Derrick McLennon, Tropicana's formative president.

To cap off the evening, guests danced the night away to the sounds of MC & Company. Proceeds from the event go to Tropicana's Capital Campaign. Event sponsors included Scotiabank Group, Honda Canada and RBC.

→ For pictures of the event, visit tropicanacommunity.org/Gala2010/Photos.html

the colour of success

Canada's first Black women's club still thrives today BY TRUE DALEY

The city of Montreal is world-famous for many reasons — its French culture, smoked meat, castles and being the place where Jackie Robinson broke the colour barrier in Major League Baseball. It's also where, in 1902, the first Black women's club in Canada was formed by a small group of African-American women.

The Coloured Women's Club (CWC) gave the wives of Black railroad workers an opportunity to be self-sufficient, despite being excluded by the overtly racist general public. By 1904, its partnership with the oldest Black congregation in Montreal created a powerful group of activists in this isolated, but vibrant, Black community. When they were banned from worshipping at St. George's Anglican Church, the CWC helped form the Union United Church.

Since its inception over a century ago, the social club has evolved to become a self-help organization with a mandate to provide mutual aid and fight poverty and social exclusion. In 1914, members purchased seven burial plots at Mount Royal Cemetery for the needy. In 1973, they organized the first Congress of Black Women at the Westbury Hotel in Toronto, which was attended by 160 women from across the country. In 1983, the group was successful in removing a racist textbook from the school curriculum. "From what I was told by other members, there was a Little Black Sambo story in the schools and it was removed because the CWC sent letters," recounts today's president Shirley Gayles of the achievement. "When I went to school here in Grade 4, my geography book told me that Black people got curly hair because a big fire singed all their hair! I wish I had kept that geography book."

A lot has changed since Gayles went to school. She says despite progress made in the civil and women's rights movements, the group's support is still needed in the community. "We started out helping unwed mothers, but there's still the occasional crisis," she says. "There are situations where the kids have money to go to school, but still need food and clothing. There are unwed mothers who are not getting the help they need because they don't qualify for social assistance, so we jump in. We had a woman who tried to commit suicide and we just sent her a cheque for $500. There was also a horrific incident some months ago where a man murdered someone and then killed himself, and left his mother destitute. The Coloured Women's Club jumped in. That's not really our mandate, but we are still here."

Currently the mandate is to support youth and their education. To date, CWC has successfully raised up to $12,000 in bursaries for Black students from the sales of its cookbook, a collection of its members' own recipes.

→ For more information or to make a donation to the Rev. Charles Este Scholarship Fund, contact Shirley Gayles at sgayles@sympatico.ca

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Detail from: "Kings' Culture Series" Steven Fakiyesi, 2010.

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Curated by: ***Sally Frater***
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Brewster, Fakiyesi, and Turner collectively challenge notions of "blackness" and representation by creating multilayered spaces wherein blackness is positioned as a marker of normality.

Detail from: "Kings' Culture Series" Steven Fakiyesi, 2010.

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Princess aims to reign in Brampton

BY ERICA PHILLIPS

One resident hopes her fresh ideas will get her a seat on the city's council

Princess Boucher no longer wants to sit on the sidelines and simply watch her community be managed. The single mother of seven children, ages 14 to 31, is running for a seat on the Brampton City Council in October's municipal election. She is one of six contenders hoping to represent the residents of Wards 2 and 6. Two popular candidates with whom Boucher is going toe-to-toe are John Hutton, who has held the position since 1985, and Dough Whillans, son of the late mayor Ken Whillans. For her part, Boucher is offering change and commitment. "The council needs an injection of new blood," she says. "It needs people with fresh ideas and enthusiasm who will bring a new perspective with the insight to reconceptualize problems and the energy to formulate and implement creative solutions."

Boucher, who was born in Jamaica, came to Canada at age 10 and has lived in Brampton for five years. Ward 6 — where she resides — has more than 50,000 residents (more than 25,000 of whom are immigrants). Its population increased 715.1 per cent between 2001 and 2006. Ward 2, geographically smaller, has more than 43,000 residents (more than 16,000 of whom are immigrants). Its population grew by 16.1 per cent between 2001 and 2006.

"THE COUNCIL NEEDS AN INJECTION OF NEW BLOOD. IT NEEDS PEOPLE WITH FRESH IDEAS AND ENTHUSIASM."

The owner and president of Princess Promotion Inc. and an event planner, Boucher feels that residents in those wards face challenges in four main areas: security, social services, housing and employment insurance. In regards to security, Boucher would like to see a police station for those wards, as there presently isn't one, and speed bumps in family neighbourhoods. From social facilities to services she says Wards 2 and 6 require homeless shelters, youth programs, teen pregnancy programs, recreational facilities, a centre for seniors, a food bank, another community centre to reflect the diversity of the wards and rehabilitation programs for ex-convicts. Her agenda also states that there must be improvements in property taxes and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board as well as affordable housing for low-income families. Lastly, Boucher is concerned about a controversial Ontario Municipal Board decision that allows a high-density development in Brampton, which other councillors are also opposing.

"Politics at the local level touch our lives in very profound ways, perhaps more so than at any other level of government," Boucher says. "It is about grassroots issues that truly affect the daily lives of my constituents and their children. I want to be at the table when those decisions are being made, representing what is in my city and my constituents' best interests."

→ For more information about Princess Boucher, call 416-662-2458 or visit voteprincess.com

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Early Detection of Prostate Cancer

Prostate Cancer Canada

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer to afflict Canadian men, affecting 1 in 6 in their lifetime. The prostate specific antigen (PSA) test is a simple blood test that can help men and their doctors assess the risk of developing prostate cancer through early detection. Without a PSA number, men and their doctors will not benefit from the ability to calculate their risk of prostate cancer.

Prostate Cancer Canada encourages men and their doctors to take the time to discuss the merits of two tests that aid in the early detection of prostate cancer: prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood testing followed by a digital rectal examination (DRE). PCC strongly recommends that men consider the following schedule for prostate cancer monitoring using PSA blood testing:

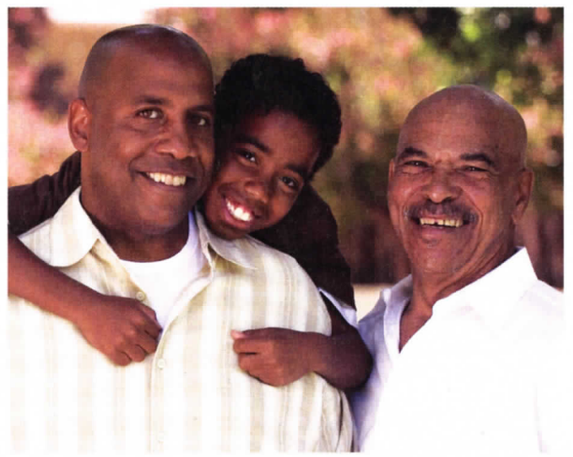
AGE 40: Establish a baseline PSA value. While the threat of prostate cancer is minimal at this age, it also precedes the onset of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), the natural enlargement of the prostate that commonly occurs with age. The onset of BPH often results in rising PSA over time, and can be confused with the onset of prostate cancer. Your doctor can observe whether your PSA levels have risen, and if so, how quickly.

Unless your resulting baseline PSA score is of concern to your doctor, the PSA need only be repeated every 5 years until age 50. Men at higher risk of prostate cancer (i.e. men whose father and/or brother developed prostate cancer and/or those of African or Caribbean descent) should begin annual PSA and DRE monitoring at age 40.

AGE 50: All men should begin annual or semi-annual PSA monitoring if they have not yet done so. A minimal increase in PSA levels against your baseline score often (in consultation with your physician) requires no further action until your next annual test. A significant increase should prompt a discussion with your doctor or urologist about follow up PSA blood tests.

The PSA blood test not only helps to diagnose prostate cancer, but helps monitor for recurrence of prostate cancer after treatment. It allows a patient and his doctor to monitor if cancer is suspected, if lifestyle changes have had an impact or if cancer has regressed or spread.

Combining the results of PSA blood testing with DRE increases both the diagnostic power and the accuracy of these early detection methods.



"The usefulness of the PSA test has been debated in medical and political circles for some time. Men should be aware of the facts and take into account age, risk factors and general health. To learn more about the test, visit prostatecancer.ca or **whatsyournumber.info**"

a LIFETIME of LEARNING

DR. AVIS GLAZE, Canada's first Black school district directo promotes a strong vision of education

BY STEPHANIE POLLARD

If you ask Dr. Avis Glaze about the importance of educating Canada's young people, the response from the highly-touted academic expert is sure to include two ingredients: thought and passion. With this positive mixture of intellect and emotion, Glaze has become one of Canada's most well respected educational consultants. Her stellar professional career, which began in the classroom, has included stops as the associate director of education with the York District School Board and as director of education of the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, making Glaze Canada's first Black female director of education. But throughout her ascension into the lofty heights of education, Glaze has held tightly to the simple notion that every student deserves a chance to succeed. "When I looked at children in my class, I saw each one as if they were my own," she says. "I'd ask myself, 'What do I want for that young person?' The answer was always, 'the best.' There should be no low expectations for students — set high expectations, push them and help them to achieve. They may not like it, but teaching is not a popularity contest. It's about high expectations and getting the best out of your kids while showing them that you care about them."

To achieve success in the classroom, Glaze believes that education in Ontario must continue to be a collaborative effort that builds on the strong vision put forth by the Ministry of Education. It is no wonder that Premier Dalton McGuinty saw fit to name Glaze Ontario's first chief student achievement officer and CEO of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, positions in which she helped to develop strategies to improve student learning and scholastic achievement. Glaze lauds Premier McGuinty's effort to support equity in education, and the willingness of Ontario's school boards to engage in innovative strategies to connect with at-risk students. "The government is doing so much in Ontario to support special education and children at risk before it's too late," says Glaze. "As a new resident of Toronto, I commend the Toronto District School Board because they have always been leaders in the area of equity and they continue to be."

Glaze is often asked about education in the Black community and the challenges that many Black students and parents face in connection with Ontario's school system. She believes that Black professionals should connect with Black students for career aspirations to become reality. "If Black kids don't see doctors, lawyers, electricians or plumbers, they won't aspire to these roles," she says. "We have to provide role models for these kids, people who are going to say, 'Yes, we did it. We can help show you the way. We can support you so that you can achieve your goals.'"

Recognizing that financial hardship can also be a deterrent to scholastic achievement, Glaze does her part by providing scholarships through the Markham African Caribbean Association, as well as supporting scholarships in education at the University of Ottawa.

Today, in what should be the restful days of an educational career that has spanned approximately four decades, Glaze is busier than ever. Her consulting firm, Edu-quest International Inc., receives daily requests for her educational expertise; the minister of education in New Zealand has asked her to be part of the nation's educational advisory panel, and she is working on a number of projects around the globe. So what's the secret to Glaze's longevity and success? "I love helping young people learn. It's as simple as that."

photography **ALEXIS FINCH**

AFRICENTRIC SCHOOL'S BACK IN SESSION

A LANDMARK EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION CELEBRATES ITS FIRST ANNIVERSARY BY SAADA BRANKER

It's one year ago that the Toronto District School Board's first-ever Africentric Alternative School (AAS) opened its doors to young learners. By mid-October, student enrolment climbed to 130, prompting national headlines. But once the dust settled, the naysayers and even the media faded. The school, meanwhile, got down to the business of education. "Then came the real stories," says Thando Hyman-Aman, the principal who helped to lead AAS staff and students through their first year.

A long-time educator, Hyman-Aman was captured by cameras in the fall of 2009 at the centre of a reporters' scrum, articulating exactly what Africentric teaching would mean. Today, she explains that during the first year her administration dealt with overlapping challenges that included a three-month turn-around to get the school running, ensuring everyone was on the same page of the provincial curriculum, and laying the ground work for forging relationships with students, parents and the community. "We started with the pressure of a 40 per cent high school dropout rate among Black students," says Hyman-Aman. The focus for her school, given that dire reality, is simple: ensure an increase in graduation rates. According to the AAS website, the way to that goal is to look high, meaning high levels in academic achievement, self-pride and motivation. At the launch of this second year, enrolment increased from 2009 to reach 160 students.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

"We had children convinced at a young age that they couldn't achieve," says Hyman-Aman. To counter the low expectations, she says students at AAS are told in no uncertain terms that they are capable. All of the students, for example, had to improve their reading skills. "We needed to instil into our children that people of African descent were not just consumers of culture, we're producers of cultures," explains Hyman-Aman. That pervasive thinking produced results, as she confirms that having caring adults in the children's lives made a difference in the first year. "By mid-year, parents said the kids were feeling more comfortable in their skin and they walked around the school with a sense of ownership," she says. "There were other scenarios [such as parents saying], 'My kid was a handful and now we're so happy my child is coming home everyday ready to do homework.'"

Logistically, the school succeeded in establishing its Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5 classes in a limited space within Sheppard Public School. Teachers pulled through, often going beyond what was required. So did some parents. When the City couldn't offer any more spaces in daycare last year, AAS teachers developed an after-school program, which extended their work hours and spurred some parents in the community to lend a hand. "It was unforeseen," says Hyman-Aman. "When you're establishing something new, you have an opportunity to develop community-based partnerships. I have to talk up the level of commitment from parents who used their expertise and rolled up their sleeves for their school. We would not have been able to do it without them."

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Other parents are learning not to exploit the kindness and commitment of AAS staff, faculty and volunteers. Since AAS's first year was "overwhelmingly positive," Hyman-Aman is careful in how she words her observation: "Obviously, you end up spending more time in the school," she says, adding that it can easily be a 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. schedule. "We would be there until the wee hours of the evening because we wanted to demonstrate a community spirit. Sometimes, people take your kindness for weakness. We had a bit of that. We have to find a gentle way to say, 'We are not going to be living in the school. It's not a drop-in centre. I have staff who have families and a life outside of this school.' There will be rules to abide by because ultimately we're nurturing a respectful environment. As I look to [next] year, we have started to lay the foundation. We just keep building."

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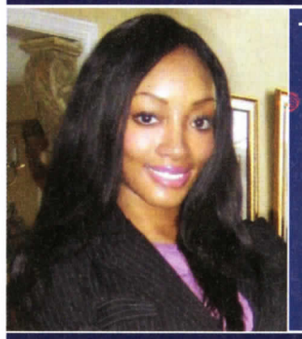

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To St. Lucia, with love

A Canadian broadcaster is ensuring that youth in her homeland receive higher education BY TONYA FACEY

Canadian television broadcaster and community advocate Gwyneth Matthew Chapman has partnered with Dr. Carl Mack, executive director of the National Society of Black Engineers; the government of St. Lucia, Goldman Sachs, and the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) to establish a scholarship program that will allow 29 students from St. Lucia to attend post-secondary studies in the United States this year. *Sway* spoke to Chapman while she was in St. Lucia.

Sway: How was this scholarship program started?
GWYNETH MATTHEW CHAPMAN: It started with inviting Dr. Mack to motivate and inspire St. Lucian youth. It got people thinking in terms of making education one of the key things that we need to develop for them. Dr. Mack wanted to do a bit more, which is how the scholarship idea came up. We think that education is the only way to bring a developing country to the level where it can compete globally.

What is the mission of the program?
The mission is to create more opportunities for St. Lucia's youth to get higher education. Less than 5 per cent of them are able to afford higher education. This assistance is vital and we greatly appreciate the support of Goldman Sachs and IIT in making this happen.

Why did you choose to develop this program in St. Lucia?
Because I'm St. Lucian! Part of our anthem is 'Where so ever you may roam, love, oh love, our island home.' This, in a sense, is about loving my island and my people. We're giving back and doing what we can to make a difference.

What were some of the challenges you faced in starting the program?
A nice challenge was that it happened so quickly. We had a month and a half to get everything up and running, including finding students, getting young people to submit applications, interviewing them and looking at their scores. Also, the scholarships were for 70 per cent of tuition, with 30 per cent having to be covered by the parents. The majority of parents didn't have any money so we were in a constant tug-of-war to try to get money to sponsor the students.

What are the long-term goals of the program?
The idea is to make sure that every single St. Lucian child who wants to go to university has the resources to pursue post-secondary education. Right now, we're pushing for more scholarships for next year since we already have that pipeline created. I would like to create an institute where we will have people from the U.S. and Canada going down to implement programs for young people and being the conduit between North America and St. Lucia in terms of technology, youth leadership and the arts.

→ For more information about this program, e-mail Gwyneth Matthew Chapman at mediapoweris@gmail.com

the {gender equation}

DO SINGLE-SEX SCHOOLS EQUAL SUCCESS? THE TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD THINKS SO

BY ERICA PHILLIPS

It's been debated and studied around the world, and now the question of whether co-ed education is unsuitable for some students has made its way to Toronto. With various research, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is addressing the issue by creating distinctive environments so that every one of the 250,000 children under its umbrella has the opportunity to succeed. The single-sex schools, called the Girls' Leadership Academy and the Boys' Leadership Academy, are two of the TSDB's "programs of choice", announced in 2009 by newly appointed director of education Chris Spence.

The basic premise, though it's not entirely clear why, is that boys and girls learn differently. It's thought that both biological and social factors are at play. In some cases there are also behavioural and disciplinary issues that need to be addressed. Various international studies also indicate that boys still lag behind girls in literacy. And even though the gap in mathematics has been improving, there are concerns about the number of boys who do not graduate from high school.

"If we look at our TDSB research, we find that there is an achievement gap between boys and girls," says Karen Grose, coordinating superintendent of innovative programs and futuristic schools. "We want to look at supportive programs for boys." That gap, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test results, is more pronounced in writing.

Expected to open in fall 2011, the two academies will start with Grades 4 to 8, with plans to extend them into the lower and upper grades. Grose says Grades 4 to 8 were targeted first because it is during those years that students start to face peer pressure and other challenges. Among other things, the Girls Leadership Academy will look at entrepreneurship and leadership, working together, mentorship and maximizing potential. For boys, the focus will be on instructional strategies that will close the achievement gap and get boys more engaged in learning, Grose says. Some boys need more active and competitive learning environments. However, Grose says all "programs of choice" must deliver the provincial curriculum.

To ensure this, committees have been meeting since last fall to create the alternative options, with participants from within and separate of the TDSB sharing their opinions. A feasibility study, which will outline the operational parameters, equity of access, costs, communications strategy and more is due to be released this fall.

The choice to implement the programs is backed by U.S. findings, such as a 2002 study from the National Association for Single-Sex Public Education (NASSPE), which reported improvements in test scores for boys and girls in single-sex environments. The NASSPE also found that students in single-sex schools tend to take a broader range of courses outside of traditional gender-oriented ones. There are more girls in advanced math, physics and computer science and more boys in foreign languages, art, drama or music.

Ultimately, however, Grose says it's up to parents to choose the most suitable learning environment for their children. "You know your child best," she sums it up.

→ For more information, vis it tdsb.on.ca or singlesexschools. org

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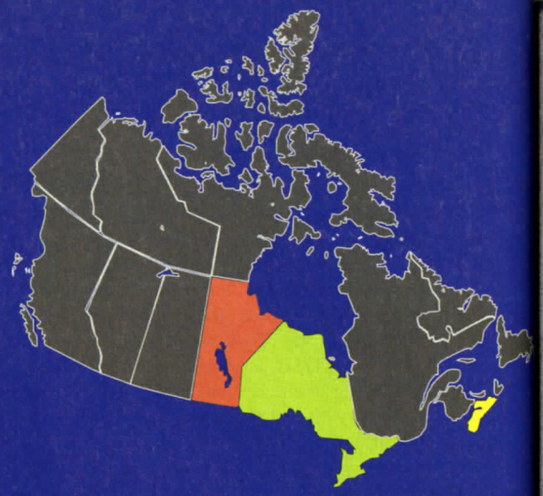

Organization: The Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples at York University
Purpose: Proud to be part of an international network of research centres committed to overcoming injustice and inequity as a result of slavery and promoting a greater understanding of the history of slavery and its legacy. The Institute fosters debate, informs public policy and strives to resolve current social injustices.
More Information: 416-736-2100 ext. 33058 or yorku.ca/tubman/

Organization: The African Studies Program at the University of Toronto
Purpose: Provide opportunities to study African societies, cultures and histories through interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary lenses at three different levels of specialization. Students have the option to pursue a major or a minor in African Studies.
More Information: 416-946-0283 or newcollege.utoronto.ca/programs/africanstudies.html

Organization: Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC) at York University
Purpose: Latin America and the Caribbean are a living result of an amalgamation of different cultures over a period of time. Hence, CERLAC is a multidisciplinary research unit concerned with the economic development, political and social organization, and cultural contributions of Latin America and the Caribbean.
More Information: 416-736-5237 or yorku.ca/cerlac

Organization: African Studies at York University
Purpose: African Studies is an interdisciplinary program that allows students to combine their interest in Africa with a proficiency in a given discipline. Its purpose is to enable students to pursue this interest through a series of courses that offer a variety of approaches to the area in a number of different disciplines.
More Information: 416-736-2100 ext. 33155 or arts.yorku.ca/african

Organization: Ontario Black History Society (OBHS)
Purpose: The Ontario Black History Society was founded in 1978 to protect and educate about the legacy left by Black people in the province. This organization provides a wealth of resources for research. It also presents audio-video lectures to schools and libraries that help pupils to get an understanding of Black heritage in Ontario.
More Information: 416-867-9420 or blackhistorysociety.ca

Organization: Black Educators Association of Manitoba
Purpose: Provides learning materials, hosts cultural awareness workshops and gives ongoing support to Black Canadian students. One program in particular, the Black Youth Internship Program, offers a positive experience while encouraging Black students to stay in school.
More Information: 204-275-0870

Organization: Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia
Purpose: Opened in 1983, the African-Nova Scotian museum and library resource centre houses a number of cultural interpretations in the form of music, plays and concerts and hosts educational workshops, lectures and tours.
More Information: 902-434-6223 or bccns.com

Organization: The Council on African Canadian Education (CACE)
Purpose: CACE is aa provincial advisory council with a mandate to provide advice and guidance to the Minister of Education with respect to the development, implementation, evaluation and funding of educational programs and services for African-Nova Scotian learners.
More Information: 902-424-2678 or cace.ns.ca/home.shtml

Organization: The Black Educators Association of Nova Scotia (BEA)
Purpose: This organization was founded in 1969 to help Black Nova Scotian communities develop strategies toward an equitable education system. It also works with the African-Canadian Service Division, the Department of Education and Culture and various community groups, parent associations and school boards. The BEA is a non-profit organization.
More Information: 902-424-0636 or thebea.ns.ca

ACROSS CANADA
Organization: The National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)
Purpose: Although it was founded in America, the NSBE has chapters across Canada. The purpose of this organization is to increase the number of culturally responsible Black engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally and positively impact the community. It offers its members leadership training, professional development, mentoring opportunities, career placement services and more.
More Information: nebaex@nsbe.org

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WOMEN WITH *Sway*

MICHAËLLE JEAN

OCCUPATION:
Journalist and 27th Governor General of Canada (since Confederation)

CONTRIBUTION:
Michaëlle Jean knows what it's like to help those in need. Her road to lending a helping hand started when Jean was 11 and her family fled the brutal Haitian dictatorship of Francois Duvalier (Papa Doc). Settling in Montreal, Jean attained several university degrees. Her expertise with languages (Italian, Spanish, French, Haitian Creole and Portuguese) allowed her to assist and to reach out to victimized women and children from diverse backgrounds. She also conducted academic studies on sexually abused women. In the late 1980s Jean's career shifted to journalism. During this time, she appeared on several Canadian television and radio shows. On Sept. 25, 2005, Jean was appointed the 27th Governor General of Canada (since Confederation), making her the first Black person in that post.

INSPIRATION:
"I think really working on reasons to believe and to hope in humanity's possibilities is something that inspires me a lot ... I believe in the power of ideas. I believe in empowering people. I like people and I love connecting. It's a communion of ideas, values, ideals, and it's magic. People crave for that."

MESSAGE TO YOUNG PEOPE:
"Five years ago, when I assumed the post of Governor General, I made youth one of my mandate priorities. Throughout my visits from coast to coast to coast, I have had the immense privilege of meeting with young Canadians from all walks of life. Along the way, I have discovered a generation of passionate and daring young people whose imagination knows no bounds and who recognize that diversity and individual differences are a great source of mutual pride and enrichment. I have also been impressed by young people's ability to come up with solutions and to create networks of solidarity. In the face of every challenge, they represent a promise of renewal. They are agents of change — a living strength that wants to grow, to have its voice heard and to find its place in the heart of our communities."

JANICE GAIREY

OCCUPATION:
President of The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Ontario Chapter

CONTRIBUTION:
Janice Gairey stares at the ugly face of racism everyday to ensure that women of colour receive the equity that they deserve in the workplace. Herself facing racial barriers, Gairey makes it her duty to provide advice, resources and a voice for those who are unable to speak out against ill treatment.

INSPIRATION: "I'm six generations Canadian Black. We came through the Underground Railroad. I know what my ancestors, who were runaway slaves, had to face. I know every generation it has gotten better, but racism is alive and well. I also have to remember that I have 16 grandchildren and if I give up, they'll want to give up too. I can't do that to them. They're my generation of hope."

ADVICE TO YOUNG WOMEN:
"I have 16 grandchildren, eight of them are going to become women. It is so important for them to have post secondary education because of the competition. [With education, they have a step up in] their ability to find work suited to their skills. It's critical. Times are changing and chances of moving up if you don't have an education are slimmer."

WOMEN WITH *Sway*

TONYA LEE WILLIAMS

OCCUPATION:
Actress, artist and visionary

CONTRIBUTION:
As one of Canada's most recognized actresses, Tonya Lee Williams is best known for her role as Dr. Olivia Winters on television's top daytime drama *The Young and the Restless*. Today, she strategically balances roles as actress, producer, director, writer, entrepreneur, activist and artist. Her passion for film led to the creation of the ReelWorld Film Festival, an entertainment and business summit that engages issues of inclusion and diversity within the entertainment industry.

INSPIRATION:
"I've always loved stories. Acting is storytelling and I have an arts side that needs to be satisfied. I remember seeing Diahann Carroll on [the show] *Juila*. She was not playing the domestic role that is usually given to Blacks, instead she was playing a nurse. My mom was a nurse and it made me feel so proud to see a Black woman on TV telling that story. Once I got that fire ignited, I drove myself to be successful."

ADVICE TO YOUNG WOMEN:
"If you want to enter this industry, be realistic. It's a very tough business. Ask yourself what you are bringing to the table that is different from everyone else. Everyone is looking for the easy ticket — girls want to put on a lot of makeup, wear tight clothes and try to make it. I think that is dehumanizing. If you are in it for the long haul, you will definitely need more."

ESTHER ENYOLU

OCCUPATION:
Executive director of the Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham (WMRCC)

CONTRIBUTION:
Esther Enyolu invested 24 years of experience to assist needy women, specifically survivors of domestic abuse. As director of the WMRCC, she has helped women, children and youth adjust to life in Canada by providing a variety of resources like counselling, mentorship and workshops. Her work has yielded several accolades, including the YWCA Durham Women of Distinction Award and the Outstanding Volunteer Achievement Award.

INSPIRATION:
"When I see the impact of my support on women and children, it encourages me and makes me continue to do what I'm doing because I'm making a difference in so many people's lives."

ADVICE TO YOUNG WOMEN:
"It is a rewarding career, but it is also a difficult career. It is about supporting, it is about hearing difficult stories. They have to prepare themselves to do the job and they have to take care of themselves. A career of trauma, associated with being a service provider like a counsellor, also requires you to take a break sometimes."

OLIVE SENIOR

OCCUPATION:
Poet and author

CONTRIBUTION:
Olive Senior brings a unique aspect to Canadian literature with her works about the idiosyncrasies of life in rural Jamaica. Her largest undertaking, *A-Z of Jamaican Heritage*, aims to educate everyone about Jamaican culture. The goal in her writing is to shed a realistic light on Caribbean people, abolish stereotypes and educate those with a Caribbean background about this rich society.

INSPIRATION:
"Oh, I decided I was going to be a writer when I was a child. I've always written, so I learned to read at a very early age and I think I realized the power of language, you know. People admire you if you had command of a language ... it never occurred to me that I'd be anything else."

ADVICE TO YOUNG WOMEN:
"First you have to start, you know? A lot of people who are 70 or 80 say, 'I've always wanted to be a writer!' Well if you want to write, write! The other thing is, it's a craft, so learn your craft. It's not just about gushing and spouting out emotionally, it's about learning a craft and being really good."

AUDREY CAMPBELL

photography **CRAIG SYMONDS**

OCCUPATION:
President of the Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA)

CONTRIBUTION:
Audrey Campbell does not take no for an answer. Whether she is developing a new marketing tactic for her company or raising money for the Jamaican Canadian Association, Campbell's tenacity pushed her to a number of successes, including co-owning a restaurant and creating marketing strategies for corporations. Although the pace of Campbell's career has slowed, her presidency at the JCA promises to be going full speed into a future crammed with potential.

INSPIRATION:
"One of the things I noted is that Jamaica is a nation of firsts. We are the first Caribbean island to have a bobsled team, a dogsled team and a downhill skier. We have [Jamaicans as] the first Black councillor in Brampton, Ontario and the youngest deputy chief [of police] in Canada. We are a nation of firsts."

ADVICE TO YOUNG WOMEN:
"One of the things I learned is to never let other people's opinion of you become your opinion of yourself. Never let anybody tell you that you cannot do something. Never let somebody rain on your parade. You got to keep your head down, believe in your ideas and in yourself and keep going. Don't be discouraged by 'no.' It means nothing."

photography **TANISHA PALMER-PORTER**

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WOMEN WITH *Sway*

ASHA MCLEOD

OCCUPATION:
Owner of Jazma Hair Inc.

CONTRIBUTION:
Hailing from Trinidad and Tobago, award-winning stylist Asha McLeod has mastered all kinds of hair textures and even developed her own line of products to make sure her clients' hair is at its strongest and healthiest. In fact, Jazma Hair Inc. prides itself on knowing its clients' hair right down to a science. Even *Essence* magazine agreed, ranking it as one of the top salons in North America.

INSPIRATION:
"When I met my husband, I was actually working in a punk rock salon [with mostly white customers] and at home I would do my Black friends' hair. People came to me based on my mother's reputation as far as Black hair was concerned. So whether I wanted it or not, people gravitated towards me. My husband was like, 'What are you doing? You're doing white hair in the salon and Black hair at home. Why don't you just mix it up?'"

ADVICE TO YOUNG WOMEN:
"This is what I tell people when I hire them: It's okay to be mediocre. But if you're striving to be the best, get continual education. That means when you come out of hairdressing school find a training salon ... but that's only if you want to be at the top of your game. It's like any industry. You can get into any industry and stay at one level. You can struggle below mediocre or strive to be the best. It depends on where you want to situate yourself."

RITA SHELTON DEVERELL

OCCUPATION:
Social activist, television broadcaster

CONTRIBUTION:
Since moving to Canada from Texas in 1967, Rita Shelton Deverell has used her career in journalism to create a voice for Aboriginal Peoples. In 2005, Shelton Deverell completed her term as director of news and current affairs for the world's first Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). It was her skills in team building and producing that gave the network its stability and an Aboriginal successor.

INSPIRATION:
"I was almost shocked that there was so much unexamined racism on the Prairies. Things have changed over the years and are a great deal better. But, racism is racism. At first, I couldn't even adjust to the idea that people thought they were only being racist if they were disparaging against Black people ... the largest visible minority are Aboriginal People and those are the people where I could see my history, my conflicts or whatever it is I was on about social justice. Those were the people who were important."

ADVICE TO YOUNG WOMEN:
"The more skills you have, the better off you are. If you want to be a television director, that is the type of occupation that is extremely difficult, if not downright impossible, to be continually employed at. So, what you need to do is amass as many skills as possible in the areas of work that you are interested in. Putting all those things together may keep you working. Also, get a wonderful education."

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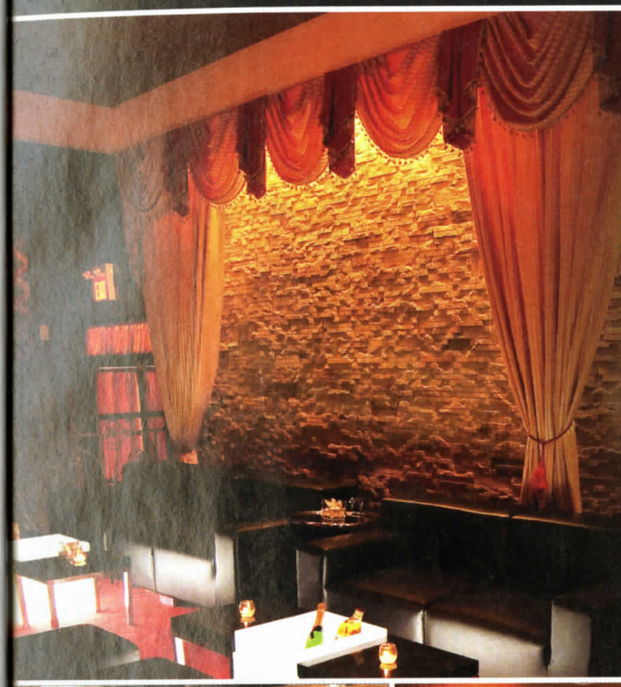

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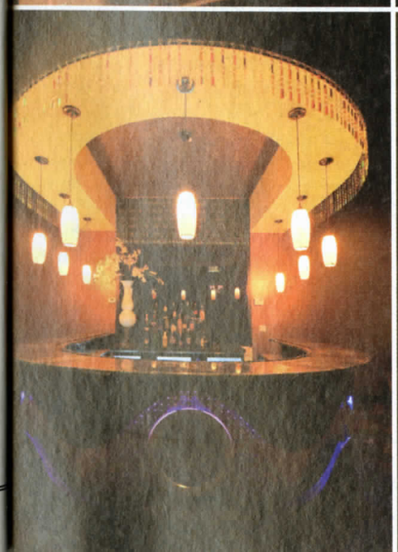

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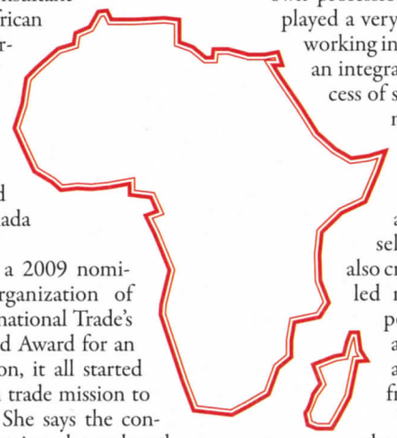
AFRICA *to the* WORLD

CANADIAN AND AFRICAN BUSINESSWOMEN UNITE TO ENCOURAGE INTERNATIONAL TRADE

BY KHALID MAGRAM

Africa and design have been two lifelong passions of Kathleen Holland, president of KMH International, who is using her expertise as a market strategist and business consultant to assist small African business enterprises to enter the market and maintain successful relationships with distributors and retailers in Canada and globally.



For Holland, a 2009 nominee of the Organization of Women in International Trade's Joanna Townsend Award for an Export Champion, it all started with a Canadian trade mission to Africa in 2002. She says the contacts and information she gathered during the mission proved to be pivotal in developing an international business plan. Another pivotal point came after the trip, when Holland was introduced to the non-profit Canadian and African Business Women's Alliance (CAABWA), in which she found the mentorship she was seeking.

Canadian and African women created the CAABWA, which fosters business linkages between Canada and countries in Africa. Its mandate is to support African women who are entrepreneurs in their efforts to participate in international trade. One of the major opportunities that CAABWA offers is its internship program. Holland, who is now a board member with the organization, advises anyone who is interested in working in Africa to apply for the CAABWA internship, which is awarded though Canadian International Development Agency.

Holland also credits CAABWA for her own professional success: "CAABWA has played a very important role in my career working in Africa," she says of becoming an integral part of the growth and success of small businesses on the continent. Holland's contribution is in design, where she helps to transform African art into high-end home design and decor products, which sell internationally. Holland also created Design Africa, a branded marketing vehicle that supports international market access for product designers and handicraft manufacturers from Africa.

The endeavours have taken the global businesswoman to several African countries, including South Africa, Ghana, Senegal, Swaziland, Zambia, Ethiopia, Mali, Uganda, Kenya and Burkina Faso, which hosts the continent's largest craft festival every two years. Gone Rural, based in Swaziland, is one of the companies that has benefited from Holland's expertise. The non-profit organization, which creates unique home accessories, is the source of sustainable home-based incomes for 740 rural Swazi women, most of whom are caring for orphans with HIV/AIDS. Despite such a daunting task, the attitude of these women is what Holland holds dear: "My heart overflows when I have the opportunity to work with such inspiring women," she says. "Theirs is the most amazing story."

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the changing heartbeat of healthcare

Dr. Joan Lesmond explains how the nursing field is evolving

BY STEPHANIE POLLARD

When Dr. Joan Lesmond first came to Canada, becoming an expert in the field of community healthcare was the farthest thing from her mind. Thirty years later, Dr. Lesmond is the executive director of the Saint Elizabeth Healthcare Foundation and executive director of community engagement for Saint Elizabeth Healthcare. She is also the former president of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario. "When you come into a new system," she says, "you have to assess, 'What do I really need to be? What can I be?' I started off working in factories, babysitting and doing a multitude of other things. Finally, I found an opportunity to work as a healthcare aid in a nursing home. That's when my desire for helping people grew and I decided that I wanted to become a nurse."

Dr. Lesmond pursued her studies while working full time and even had to repeat one course that she would eventually end up teaching at Ryerson University. During her time in the field, Dr. Lesmond has noticed that nursing is quite popular among Black women. She believes there are a few reasons for this: "It's a caring profession and it's also a career that's very, very fulfilling."

With that fulfillment comes a host of unique responsibilities, especially for the new generation of nurses. Dr. Lesmond says today's nurses are able to help a patient navigate through the system, rather than just care for him or her. This means they must look at things from a policy perspective combined with political and patient-centred awareness as they encounter an empowered client group. "We are dealing with clients who are technologically savvy and can access a lot of the same information that you would normally get from a nurse," she explains. "So the nurse really has to be super prepared to deal with the new knowledge-powered clients."

Another advantage of being a nurse today is the ability to branch out into different areas of the medical field, such as administration, education or policy. Dr. Lesmond says nurses who are thinking about expanding their career must have a plan. "They have to seize the opportunities and they need to be able to look at things from a broader perspective," she says.

Advancement in the field does, however, bring obstacles, to which Dr. Lesmond is no stranger. She strongly believes that an in-depth education and sense of self-worth can yield excellent results. "Some people may wonder, 'How can a Black woman get these opportunities?' I've never seen myself as being second to anyone and that's what I also practice," she says. It's this sentiment that has allowed Dr. Lesmond to succeed in difficult situations, including an incident during a meeting where someone quipped about how lucky she was to have her job. "I knew where he was going and I said, 'Actually, it was not luck. I was the best damned qualified person out of the 10 people who applied.' He was taken by surprise. I think part of my thinking comes from my parents who taught me to believe in who I am and that I am no less than anyone because I'm a Black woman."

photography JESSE NORTH

Prostate Cancer Facts

1 in 6 Canadian men will be diagnosed with the disease in their lifetime

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer to afflict Canadian men

Prostate cancer is as prevalent in men as breast cancer is in women

Over 90% of prostate cancer cases are curable if detected and treated in their earliest stages

25,500 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year alone

4,400 men will die of the disease this year

Prostate cancer is turning up in men in their 40s

Men with a family history of prostate cancer and those of African or Caribbean descent are at greater risk of developing the disease

Prostate cancer develops as a result of dietary, environmental and hereditary factors

For more information on prostate cancer, visit **prostatecancer.ca**

this time, IT'S PERSONAL

Keshia Chanté HAS AN EDGIER SOUND FOR NIGHT AND DAY

BY LENNY STOUTE

Keshia Chanté has done it. The R&B diva from Toronto has finally returned to the music landscape with an edgier pop sound, which leaves no doubt that she's all grown up. "It's pretty much my diary; it's all very personal stuff," says Chanté of her new album, *Night & Day*, slated for release in Spring 2011. Known for dance pop and romantic ballads, Chanté's upcoming release is a dual disk that includes her well known signature sound, along with new organic elements that display her evolution as an artist.

"I was travelling all over New York, Miami and L.A., working with different writers and producers," she says. "At one point, I had 100 songs, but it still didn't feel like it was happening for me. This is the third album and I had more substantial things to say. So I came back to Toronto, assembled some musicians and a couple of writers and just let it flow." Fans will surely be surprised by the new material, which is clearly the product of growth and the confidence to get personal and exploratory. This time around she's shaped an album of real life situations, underpinned by concepts that give even its most dancified moments deep emotional gravity.

For example, the song "Test Drive" speculates what it would be like if you could test-drive a relationship before getting emotionally attached. "That'd get us through the part when you first meet someone you like and all you can see is the glitter before you find out who they really are," Chanté says. Another conceptual track is "Table Dancer," which came to the singer during a night out in Las Vegas when she noticed how many women were dancing on tables. It wasn't about being sexual, she says, the women were just feeling good enough to jump on a table and let it all out. The moment resulted in an empowering track. The album covers serious topics as well. In "Dead to Me" she sings of how indifference can make you so removed from someone you once loved that they no longer have the power to hurt you.

The ever-present Drake connection can be speculated with "Dead to Me," but Chanté denies that it's about him. "Oh no," she says. "Drake is very dear to me and remains a good friend. We're steadily in touch but given our schedules, don't actually meet up that much." Chanté indicates the scheduling problem was part of the issue in forming a relationship with Drake when the pair started dating as 15-year-olds. "It was more like puppy love. We tried to have a relationship but the timing wasn't the best. Plus, we were so young. It's probably for the best we didn't have a serious relationship back then."

With her new album being top of mind, conversation quickly returns to her career. Aside from writing songs, she also had a hand in mapping out how the instruments on the record should sound. "It was the most hands-on album experience I've ever had and I loved it," she says. "It was liberating." She also commends her new label, Universal Music Canada, for having the faith in the self-penned material and stylistic shift to realize that there's enough on the album to satisfy the company and her core fans. Chanté is confident that the songs are strong enough to entice her long-time fans to come along for a more conceptual, edgier ride (something like Rihanna's shift in sound from "A Girl Like Me" to "Rated R"). In Chanté's case, it was a combination of affairs of the heart, hassles with a previous record company and just plain growing up that pushed her to a place where *Night & Day* was not only possible but also necessary: "I definitely had to do this album, had to get certain things off my chest," she says. "I wrote some tunes in winter. It was all gloomy and I was in a darker place. But even when the seasons changed, I listen back to the songs and there isn't one I would change."

The first official single and video is "Table Dancer," but a video for "Test Drive" will also be released virally at the same time. "It's a singles world and I'd like to release three singles in a row, work them hard and see what comes back before I get into working the full album. We'll see how it goes." What's not in doubt is the genuine excitement in the 22-year-old's voice when she talks about busting out the new stuff live: "I'm coming out with a hot band, the lights, the dancers, the full nine. It's gonna be awesome."

photography ALEXIS FINCH

all HAIL the Canadian Queen of Hip-Hop

Looking back at the celebrated career of rap royalty **Michie Mee**

BY DEL F. COWIE

When Michie Mee signed her first record deal, champagne bottles weren't popping everywhere. "I signed my record deal in my building lobby," she says, laughing. Despite the modest environment in which it was officially inked, the deal's historical significance can't be overstated. Michie Mee, along with DJ La Luv, was the first Canadian hip-hop act to be signed to a major label deal in the U.S. She was just 15-years-old at the time.

But Michie was not only a pioneer in this respect. She was also progressive as one of the few prominent hip-hop artists who were consciously fusing the sounds coming out of New York with music from Jamaica — to which hip-hop owes much of its sonic lineage. It helped Michie to create her own inimitable style that could switch up at a moment's notice. "I didn't even really know I was putting a stamp on it because I was really living it," she says. "What I did was put a dancehall fashion twist to hip-hop. It came out in the music because I was living a dancehall style with hip-hop and it also came out in my dress code." In retrospect, it's no surprise that her 1991 debut album, in tandem with DJ La Luv, was entitled *Jamaican Funk: Canadian Style*.

Michie's career has a habit of coinciding with groundbreaking occurrences. In 2000, she took on the role of Divine in the CBC series *Drop The Beat*. Based on the community radio existence of many Canadian hip-hop shows, the series was touted as one of the first dramatic shows to revolve around hip-hop culture. Additionally, she hasn't limited her scope to just hip-hop. In the mid to late '90s, she was part of Raggadeath, a group that mixed rap, rock and reggae in equal measure. It's an experience that she remembers fondly: "The most fun I've had doing music in Canada was the Raggadeath band," she says. "It was such a journey in a short time. We did three albums, more than I've done hip-hop albums." Michie is still working on new music, collaborating with artists, appearing on remixes and creating her own album, which she promises will incorporate everything she has done in the past with a mature outlook.

Her veteran status also means that she is often a go-to person for opinions on the state of the industry. With the rapid ascension of Canadian hip-hop star Drake, Michie's insights, given her own achievements, are particularly timely. "He's got the eyes of the world right now," she says. "You don't have to like his record to know Drake, and that's a good feeling. Anywhere you go after that, in terms of being a Canadian, you can mention Drake and be proud musically. Having him do urban music that's worldwide? That's big."

While Drake's success might be the Canadian hip-hop story of the year, Michie is working on the story of her life. She has begun writing a book, but it might take some time for its release. "First, but not least, I'm still living the book," she says. "I don't think I'm in a spot where it's like, 'I've got to tell this.' I'm still living the end. There's another chapter and I don't want to leave it out."

photography C.J. CROMWELL

Time TRAVELLER

WITH HER ERA-BENDING SOUND, **Tanika Charles** TRANSCENDS MUSICAL EXPECTATIONS

BY DEL F. COWIE

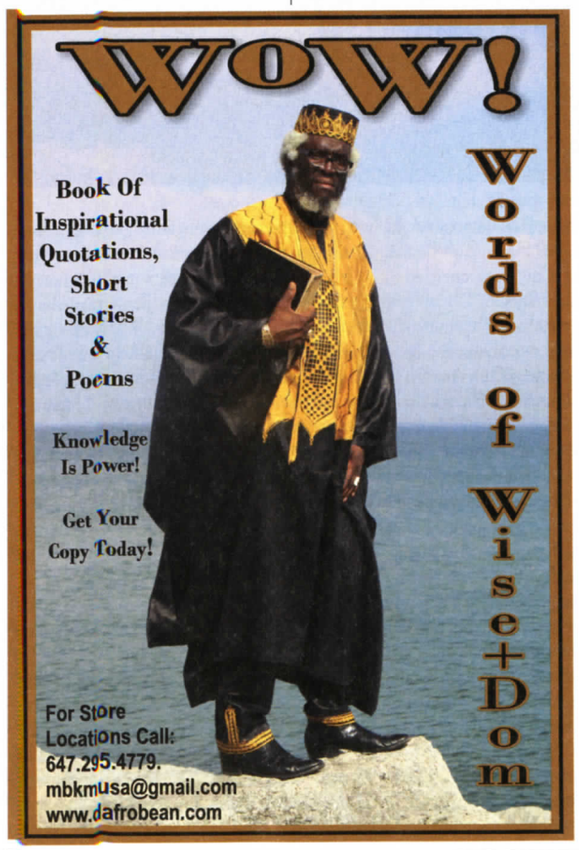
With the throwback spirit of her charming single "Silly Happy Wild" garnering her new fans, Toronto R&B singer Tanika Charles is paving her own unique path with a retro meets hip-hop style. Known previously for her work as a backup singer for Zaki Ibrahim, Charles' "What?What!What?" EP announces the arrival of a talented singer and performer. She recently opened for Nigerian singer/songwriter Nneka and *Sway* caught up with Charles at Toronto's El Mocambo just after her sound check.

Sway: The last time I remember seeing you, you were riding your bike down Queen Street. When I listened to your EP, I realized this was exactly what you were doing in the song "Parkdale". Are all your songs based on personal experience?
TANIKA CHARLES: Absolutely. I was living in Edmonton, on a farm. I was going to get married. I'm gonna be really real here, it wasn't for me. It was a very strange time in my life. I then moved from Edmonton to Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood, and so the story goes. Each song is a point in my life since I moved here and right before I moved here.

"Silly Happy Wild" reached No. 1 on the New Flow 93.5 FM's Megacity Countdown and stayed there for four weeks. Is it surprising to you that the song has caught on so quickly?
Yeah, actually it was surprising. I was happy while it was at No. 3. I can't actually believe it moved that fast. When it hit No. 1, I actually started crying. The work that producer Rich Kidd and I put into that song, with the live elements and all that good stuff, it took a long time and it was pretty stressful. I'm really pleased with where it is right now.

On the EP, you have created this "Ms. Chawlz" character. What's the difference between Ms. Chawlz and Tanika Charles?
Ideally, Ms. Chawlz is a little bit older than Tanika. She is an emotional, sensitive and passionate woman, so she's gone through heartache. She loves hard and a lot of the time when her heart is broken, she tries to feel sexy again. She tries to feel like she's worth something even though she's breaking down. She loves to drink a little bit. How does she overlap with Tanika Charles? I'm a passionate person, for sure, but I'm happy. I love people. Ms. Chawlz loves people too — men more.

You draw on a lot of eras, musically and also in your presentation. There's kind of a retro feel to what you're doing. Why is that?
Why not? The Motown sound, I've always loved. When [producer] Gigz gave me the beat to my song "Think of You", I could hear that it was old school, but there's a hip-hop element to it. I am definitely a beat junkie, 100 per cent. So, I thought, 'OK, why don't we just try doing Motown-feeling songs and add hip-hop so different ages can listen to it?' There's a lot of adults — I'm talking like 40, 50, 60-year-olds — that have approached me and were like, 'I really love your music.' Then there's also [young kids] and there's that community of heads in their late 20s and early 30s who like it too.



Music: food *for the soul*

SONGSTRESS **NATASHA WATERMAN'S** NEW ALBUM SATISFIES ARTISTIC APPETITES

BY STEPHANIE POLLARD

Singer/songwriter Natasha Waterman describes her sound as 'jambalaya soul,' a bubbling dish of flavours that's ready to please a hungry and diverse audience. But instead of the spicy energy of past recordings, her latest album *Long Road* is a smooth and creamy broth of sound that satisfies its listener with heavy helpings of warm soul. "*Long Road* is a listening album," she says. "It's for when you're driving and you want to be tranquil in an easy space or you're at home and you just want to listen to good music and sip on wine. It's very calming."

To balance out this recording, Waterman says her follow-up will make you want to get up and dance with its old soul sound. It won't be ready for release until sometime in early 2011, but Waterman has plenty of material to keep her motivated, specifically her vocal training students. "I am inspired by the girls that I work with. They are amazing! It's to the point where I have to check myself and say, 'Wait a second. Maybe I need to work on this a little bit more for myself.' So, they teach me in some ways too," she says.

The mutual lessons are something Waterman holds dear to her heart as her star continues to rise. She says remaining dedicated to community programs is something that she will always continue. "It's important to share knowledge and information so that other people can benefit from your experiences."

→ To purchase *Long Road* or to find out more about Natasha Waterman, visit natashawaterman.com

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A historical **border crossing**

A NEW BOOK DOCUMENTS THE TRIUMPHS AND STRUGGLES OF BLACK NURSES IN CANADA

BY GEENA LEE

They are Black women, they were nurses and they became pioneers. Some were admitted to Canada because of their "exceptional merit," slipping through the gates of exclusionary immigration policies. Others were born here. Yet, all faced barriers as they entered a profession that was typically reserved for Caucasians. *Moving Beyond Borders: A History of Black Canadian and Caribbean Women in the Diaspora* is the first book to examine the history and document the triumphs and struggles of Black nurses in Canada. Written by Dr. Karen Flynn Ph.D., the book is an amalgamation of nearly 15 years of research.

The project began when Flynn was pursuing her masters at the University of Windsor. While there, she learned that from the 1940s to the early 1960s, Immigration Canada excluded Black people from coming to the country. However, nurses from the Caribbean were being recruited to fill the labour shortage in hospitals. It was a paradox that intrigued Flynn, who decided to focus her thesis on immigrant Caribbean women who were nurses during that time. As nurses shared their experiences of immigrant life and racism in the workplace, Flynn became further committed to the topic, especially after discovering that Black born-Canadians were excluded from nursing schools during the 1940s and 1950s. "They were told, 'We don't accept Blacks. Go to the States,'" she says.

Upon completing her Ph.D. in women's studies at York University (the first Black woman to do so), Flynn decided to write a book that would detail those untold stories. In *Moving Beyond Borders*, which will be available in April 2011, Flynn interviews 35 Black women who were nurses in Ontario from the 1940s to the 1970s. All of them reveal courageous stories of lives navigated within the framework of race, class and gender. One nurse's story, in particular, made an impact on Flynn: "Freida Steele is a Black Canadian whose father was Canada's first Black detective and Windsor, Ontario's first Black police officer," she says. "Her husband had a mental breakdown and she decided to divorce him, leaving herself with six kids to raise. Remember, this was the 1960s when people looked down on you for that. I found it so courageous."

Flynn ultimately hopes her work will inspire more research among scholars. "There needs to be more written on Blacks in Canada and Black women in particular," she says. "These nurses made a significant contribution to Canada, and without this book their stories would have been lost to historical obscurity."

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FINDING FREEDOM

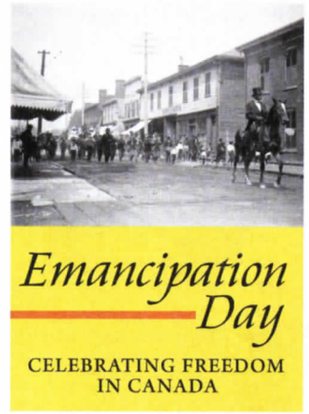
Author **Natasha L. Henry** examines emancipation in Canada

BY LEROY GRAHAM

Determined to cleanse the colony of Upper Canada of slavery, John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant of Upper Canada, made this bold statement before taking office: "The principles of the British Constitution do not admit of that slavery, which Christianity condemns. The moment I assume the Government of Upper Canada under no modification will I assent to a law that discriminates by dishonest policy between natives of Africa, America or Europe."

On Aug. 1, 1834, Simcoe's words became reality. Through social pressure, political affirmation and the stroke of a pen that signed the Abolition of Slavery Act, African slaves were liberated and able to live freely in England, parts of the Caribbean and the empire's crown colony — Canada.

In her latest offering, *Emancipation Day: Celebrating Freedom in Canada,* Natasha L. Henry takes us back to this time and into the hearts and minds of those who lived through the emotional extremes of slavery and emancipation. Working through first person accounts, historic documentation and collected images, Henry digs deep to bring the reader face-to-face with the social realities of life in Canada during these tumultuous years and the development of distinct African-Canadian traditions.



Emancipation Day: Celebrating Freedom in Canada

BY NATASHA L. HENRY
Dundurn Press
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LAYING IT ALL OUT

Shannon Boodram's book *Laid* leaves no sheet unturned, with good reason

BY GEENA LEE

"I lost my virginity at 16, by some guy I'd just met that day." With this admission, Shannon Boodram makes it obvious that she has no qualms talking about her sexual history. So sets the tone for her book *Laid: Young People's Experiences with Sex in an Easy-Access Culture*. Over a four-year span, Boodram solicited and gathered the stories of young adults, aged 18 to 25, who shared intimate details of sexual experiences they believed others could learn from.

Almost exactly a year after its release, the book is still making an impact. It was recently chosen as one of Toronto Public Library's Word Out Teen Reads and has garnered attention from media outlets such as *CBC News, CP24*, the *Toronto Star* and international outlets such as *Fox News*, L.A.'s cable channel *KTLA* and *CNN Radio*, among others.

Boodram's inspiration for the anthology sprung from her own ill-informed decisions as an insecure young girl growing into womanhood and struggling with a limited understanding of sex. "I knew nothing about it," she says. "I remember being in Grade 10 gym class and the teacher talked about the clitoris, yet she never told us where it was." Fuelled by adolescent curiosity, Boodram resorted to gleaning whatever she could from explicit romance novels, music videos and porn. "That really gave a false sense of sexual confidence because those are all really submissive mediums," she explains. "Girls may feel that they're 'out there' and, therefore, liberated. Yet, the consequences of being 'that kind of girl' can get you in hot water." The narratives compiled within *Laid* comprised for Boodram all of the conversations that she wishes she had when she was a teenager.

Of Guyanese and Dominican parentage, Boodram used her journalism training from Toronto's Centennial College and experience as a producer/host at Rogers TV to find subjects willing to submit their stories. "I had to find them all online," she says. "I was sending about 60 messages a day, for years. You have to be like a telemarketer." Efforts proved fruitful as Boodram received more than 250 submissions from all over North America, which she then narrowed down to 40 of the most poignant pieces, ranging in topics from positive encounters and abstinence to sexually-transmitted infections and rape. But one particular narrative made a significant impact on Boodram. It was a story from a young woman in Newfoundland who was gang raped. "When I was in high school there was a girl who was gangbanged by three football athletes," says Boodram, "and she pressed charges. I was like, 'Oh she just got mad because her parents found out.' But reading that story changed my perspective. Who'd want that to happen to them?"

Whether positive or negative, each story in *Laid*, published by Seal Press, provides honest anecdotal information about sex that Boodram feels is sorely lacking in schools and homes. "Adults may feel uncomfortable speaking to kids about sex because they feel they're forcing them to lose their innocence," she says. However, Boodram maintains that children are already being exposed to sex, especially online. Wishing to spare others the pitfalls of such a haphazard and risky "education," Boodram wants her book to reach the hands of youth before they become sexually active. "It's important to start thinking about the kind of sexual experiences you want to have or avoid before you're put in those situations."

MORE TO COME FROM BOODRAM

In partnership with her mother, Boodram is currently working on an anthology of stories written by mothers and their daughters. It aims to bridge the generation gap and foster a dialogue where both can look at each other as people and not just as parent versus child. (For more info, visit laidthebook.com.)

Prostate Cancer Canada

Prostate Cancer Support Groups

For many years, prostate cancer support groups in communities across Canada have provided much needed local assistance to survivors and their families. Support groups offer men a place to share information about the disease among a group of prostate cancer survivors. These groups are confidential places where men and their loved ones learn about all facets of the disease in an environment of assurance, friendship and comfort. By bringing together those with a common interest in the disease – patients, physicians, other health care professionals – support groups provide a forum to exchange information about the diagnosis, treatment and side effects of prostate cancer.

The 3 main goals of supports groups are to;

- Support patients and their families
- Provide the latest information on treatments and therapies
- Increase awareness of prostate cancer within the local community

Studies of Canadian prostate cancer support groups show that men get a sense of meaning and purpose by attending meetings. Research also indicates support group meetings help alleviate anxiety and give men a more positive outlook on their future.

There are hundreds of support groups across the country. If you or someone you know would like access to a group, please visit the Prostate Cancer Canada Network website at

prostatecancernetwork.ca

Prostate Cancer Canada Network

RAISING THE BAR

ACTRESS, PRODUCER, VISIONARY, **NGOZI PAUL** DOESN'T WAIT FOR OPPORTUNITIES, SHE CREATES THEM

BY PAMELLA BAILEY

You may know her as Starr, the budding hairstylist from the hit television show *'da Kink in My Hair*. Perhaps you recognize her from the lead role in Charles Officer's Genie-nominated film, *Short Hymn, Silent War*, which received the special jury prize at the Toronto International Film Festival. Maybe you've even watched Canada's first Black TV sitcom *Lord Have Mercy!*, nominated twice for a Gemini award, on which Ngozi Paul served as creative director, associate producer and story editor. While Paul is a versatile talent onscreen and behind the scenes, her roots are in theatre and storytelling is her passion.

In her latest foray onto the stage, the Toronto actress (whose parents hail from Dominica and St. Kitts) stars as Julia, in an adaptation of the German play *Fernando Krapp Wrote Me This Letter: An Attempt at the Truth*. Fernando Krapp, played by Ashley Wright, (Brad Fraser's *True Love Lies*, Factory Theatre) is a millionaire who writes Julia a letter calling her the most beautiful woman in town and vowing to marry her although they are strangers. Directed by Canadian Stage's artistic and general director, Matthew Jocelyn, the play explores love, power and desire. "My character takes such a huge journey in this play," says Paul. "It's the kind of play that asks a lot of questions about money and power and the way we relate to each other. It's funny and witty, but at the same time challenging and perplexing. It makes you ask questions and will hopefully spark discussion."

Paul's love for theatre goes back to her childhood when her mother, an ESL teacher, would take her to see plays. "I always had a propensity for the arts," says Paul. "My mother would take us to the Harbourfront Centre and Dream in High Park. I would also watch *Wonder Woman* and *The Cosby Show* and plot out the scenes in my imagination." That imaginative side probably led, in part, to Paul's decision to get an agent and audition for the Stratford Festival after high school instead of heading to the U.S. to study economics. "It was my first professional theatre audition and I got cast," she says. "I was thrown in the water and told to swim. But I was a fish and I just took to it. I can't picture doing anything else." She went on to receive the prestigious Tyrone Guthrie Award for her work with the Stratford Festival.

But Paul admits the greatest challenge is finding opportunities as an actress. "Look at the stories that are being told and where Black women fall into that," says Paul. "We're always the best friend of the girl in the movie.

"I would watch movies like *Elizabeth* and think, 'That's an amazing story and I know we have our own.' I would love to do a biopic of Harriet Tubman (known for her role in the Underground Railroad and fight against slavery), a real drama."

Undeterred by the lack of roles, Paul created her own production company, Ngozika Productions, to explore stories from our communities. The company has co-produced *'da Kink in My Hair* for Canwest/Global (the first primetime series produced and created by women of colour to appear on a major Canadian TV network), the short film *Shades* and the Canadian Urban Music Awards, among other projects. "Canada is a country of first generation Canadians and we have a rich tapestry of stories to draw from," she says. "You go outside my doorstep and you have stories from everywhere in the world, each one as meaningful as the next. I feel very much a part of this amazing new vitality and energy."

Her passion for telling stories blends well with her latest role as an ambassador for Plan Canada's *Because I Am a Girl* campaign. According to Plan Canada, 70 per cent of people living in extreme poverty are female. The campaign encourages investing in girls as the key to eliminating poverty because they will take care of their families and their communities. As an ambassador, Paul has traveled to Haiti where she produced a short film with a youth media group, sharing their experiences both before and after the devastating earthquake. "It's great to tell these stories from their point of view. It's very healing and cathartic," says Paul.

The multitalented Paul is currently at work developing her first feature film. "My parents have always pushed me to be a creator rather than a consumer," says Paul. "I am passionate about creating options, doorways and paths for others. I think there is infinite opportunity. It just may not look the way we expect it to."

→ *Fernando Krapp Wrote Me This Letter* runs until Oct. 16. For more information, visit canadianstage.com

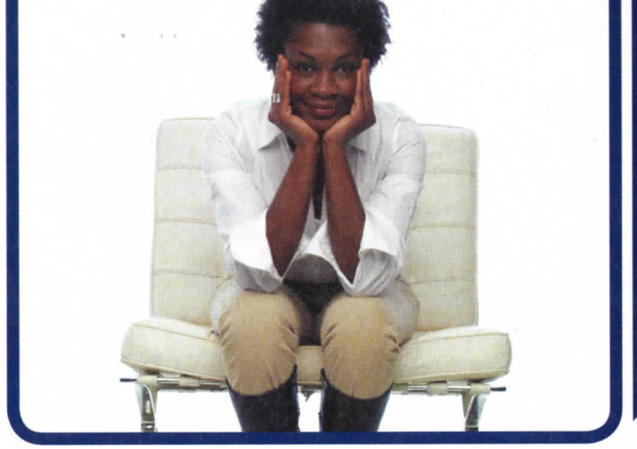
→ For more information on Plan Canada's Because I Am A Girl Campaign, visit plancanada.ca

photography ALEXIS FINCH

all the world's a stage

For Canadian actress **Yanna McIntosh**, no role is out of reach

BY STEPHANIE POLLARD



Yanna McIntosh always had a natural attraction to the spotlight. She remembers putting on puppet plays with her cousin when she was small and being interested in theatre club in high school. But acting did not take centre stage in her life until university. "It wasn't like a lightning bolt or anything," she says. "It wasn't a conscious thought of, 'Now, I'm going to be an actor' — at least not until university when a director from Germany said to me, 'You know, you should [act].'"

The advice eventually led McIntosh to enroll in theatre school at the Harvard University-housed American Repertory Theater Institute, while she was still an elementary school teacher. From there, she went on to receive a Gemini, two Dora Awards and expanded her acting from the stage to television (*This is Wonderland* and *A Raisin in the Sun*) and major motion pictures (*John Q* and *Heaven on Earth*). But McIntosh's repertoire sometimes was not enough for the film industry, which is decidedly harder for Black women. Although the actress says there are challenges you would expect, she also found that the film industry is slanted towards people who have money and power. This made it difficult to land the roles she wanted and knew she deserved. "I always had to have this label of being a 'Black actress' or there often had to be some reason why they'd cast me in the story," she says of her experience. "As I stayed on, the challenge also became for me to not apologize for being there and to not carry any sort of chip on my shoulder."

This combination caused McIntosh to gravitate back to the stage, where she became a constant at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. This season she played Hermione in the *The Winter's Tale* and her past roles include Lady MacBeth in *MacBeth* and the fairy queen Titania in the comic fantasy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The accomplished actress even has special words of encouragement for young Black women hoping to enjoy a successful acting career: "Really, really know your stuff," McIntosh says. "Know what you're about, know what you're there to do. Also, keep your eyes on that prize. Don't let anyone sway you from your goals. If you are committed, determined and know your stuff, you will prevail."

LAUGHING HER WAY TO THE

TOP

Fatima Mohamed went from waiting tables to a top spot at Yuk Yuk's comedy club BY CHRIS PENROSE

When, in 2004, Fatima Mohamed worked a summer job as a waitress in an open mic comedy dive, she had no plans to climb through the ranks of the funny business. As the executive coordinator for Yuk Yuk's Canada, she has come a long way from that summer gig, whose value was not apparent as she worked tables. "I didn't know that the comics I saw and admired on that stage would be the same ones I'd be working with years later," she says. "I was privileged enough to see them grind away, trying to make a name for themselves. The first time I ever saw Russell Peters on stage was that summer. That's something I'll never forget."

Mohamed's aspiration was actually acting, but in retrospect it's clear that finding her way into comedy was a natural extension of her personality. "I was that nerdy drama club president and captain of the improv team," she remembers. "I've always been the joker, always tried to make a funny situation funnier." But while growing up, entertainment was not an option that was encouraged. Born in Saudi Arabia, Mohamed and her family moved to Italy. While there, she spent four years with an adopted foster family. Around the age of 10, she was reunited with her biological family and they immigrated to Canada. Sixteen years later, she has a sense of humor about her family's view on comedy: "My brother comes to shows but my mom doesn't really know that I work at a comedy club," she says. "I don't think she would really like it. Even with taking drama class when I was in school, she didn't think I should be performing."

Nevertheless, Mohamed's first role at Yuk Yuk's was in 2005 as an administrative assistant. She booked comics and organized shows. Recalling that time, she laughs, "All I did was go for coffee. I got a lot of coffee." In 2008, when the departure of a VP left an opening in an upper-management role, she was brought in and trained in the corporate side of the comedy industry for the position she still holds. Primarily, Mohamed is a liaison between the operators of the 16 Yuk Yuk's sites across the country and the head office.

Out of that role, came the opportunity to produce for television. The first television show that Mohamed produced was the *Yuk Yuk's Great Canadian Laugh-Off*, which is the country's largest comedy competition with a grand prize of $25,000. Having had a taste of TV, she's now poised for more production gigs and has a desire to move into writing and on-camera roles. But speaking about the upcoming project on which she is working, Mohamed is discreet: "Our new show will air sometime in the fall on Bite TV," she says. "It's definitely something we're very proud of and I can't wait until it airs."

And while it becomes clear that she rarely thinks about it, her success in the comedy industry is no small feat. "The art form of comedy is old," she says, "and it's a boys club, for sure. Things are changing though. There was the stereotype that women comics only talk about sex and their periods, but now they are being taken more seriously and dealing with a wide range of content. They are writing solid acts. They are storytellers, talking about how they see the world. It's the way that good comedy should be."

For women who may be thinking of getting into the business, Mohamed draws from her own steps for advice. "Learn everything you can about it," she says. "Go out to Yuk Yuk's and watch live stand-up. Practice your craft and try to be the best that you can be."

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3. DANA ALEXANDER
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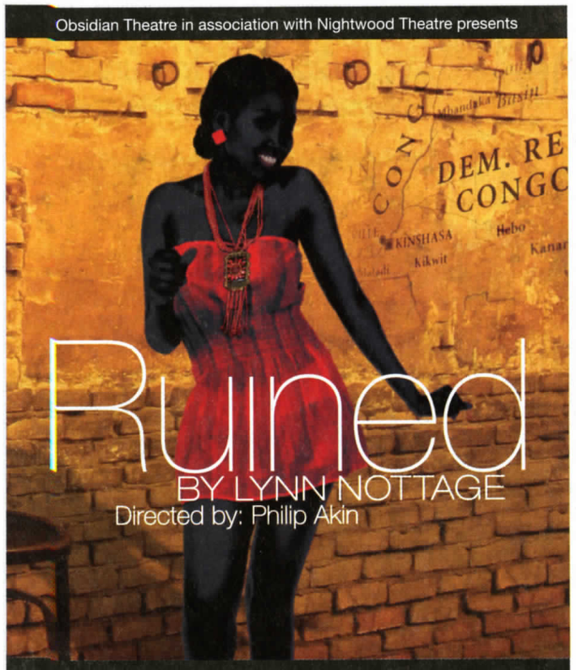
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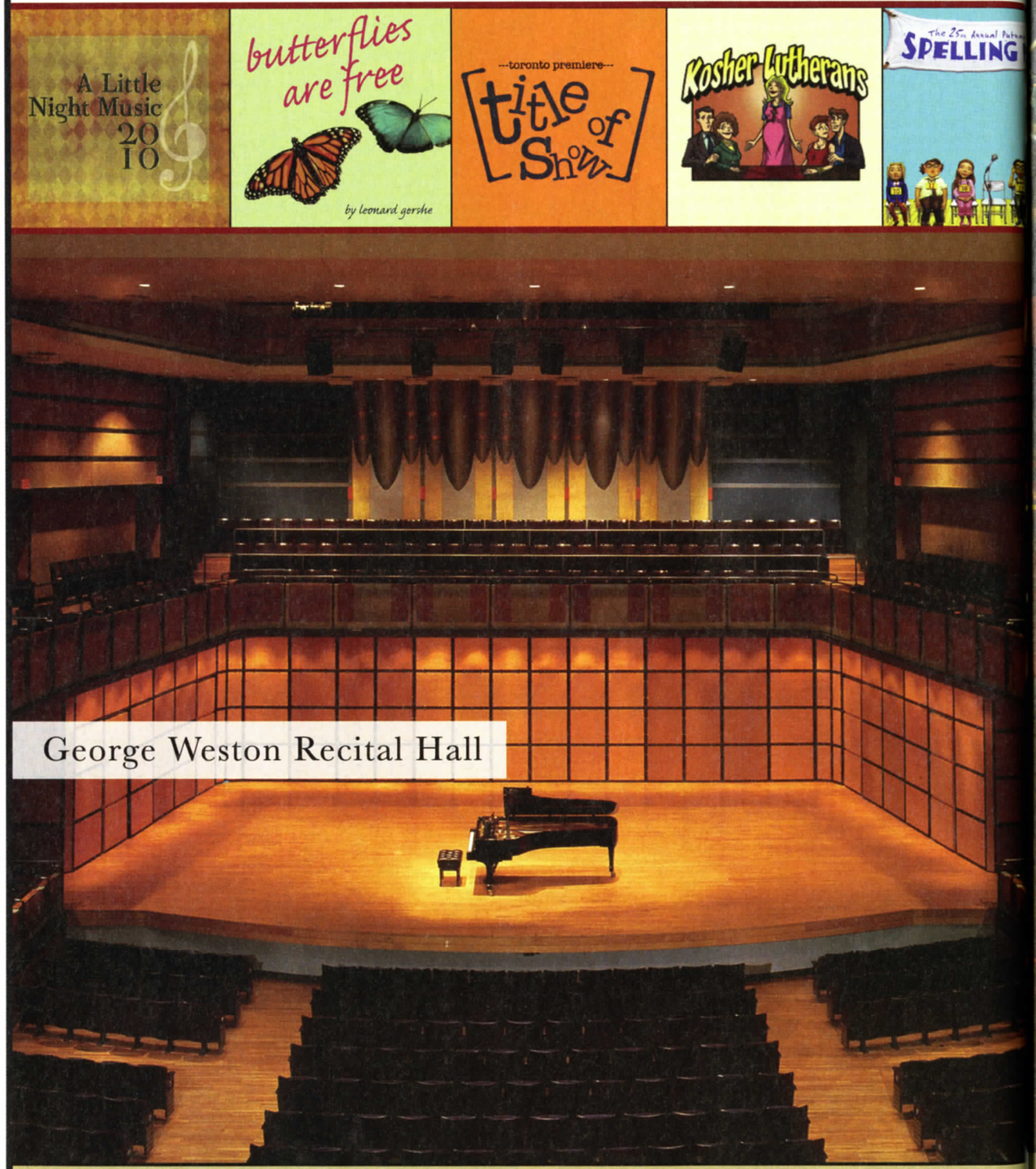

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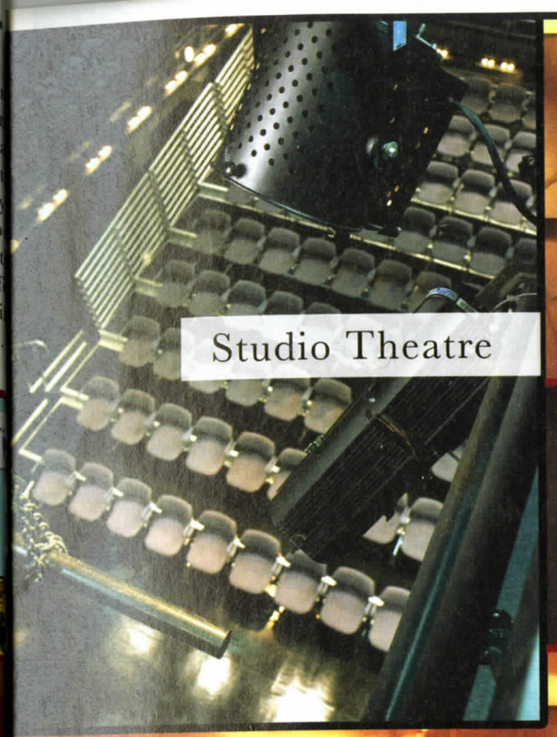

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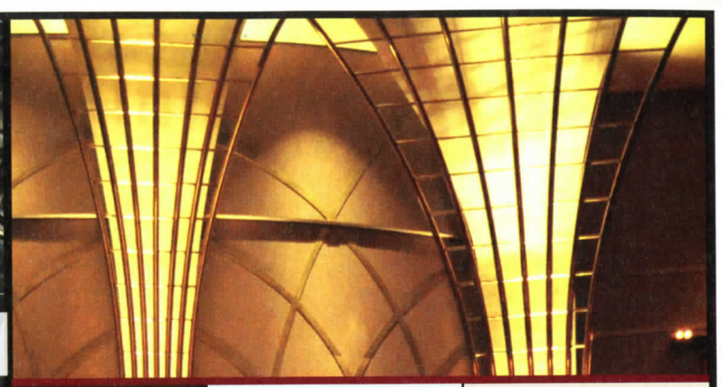

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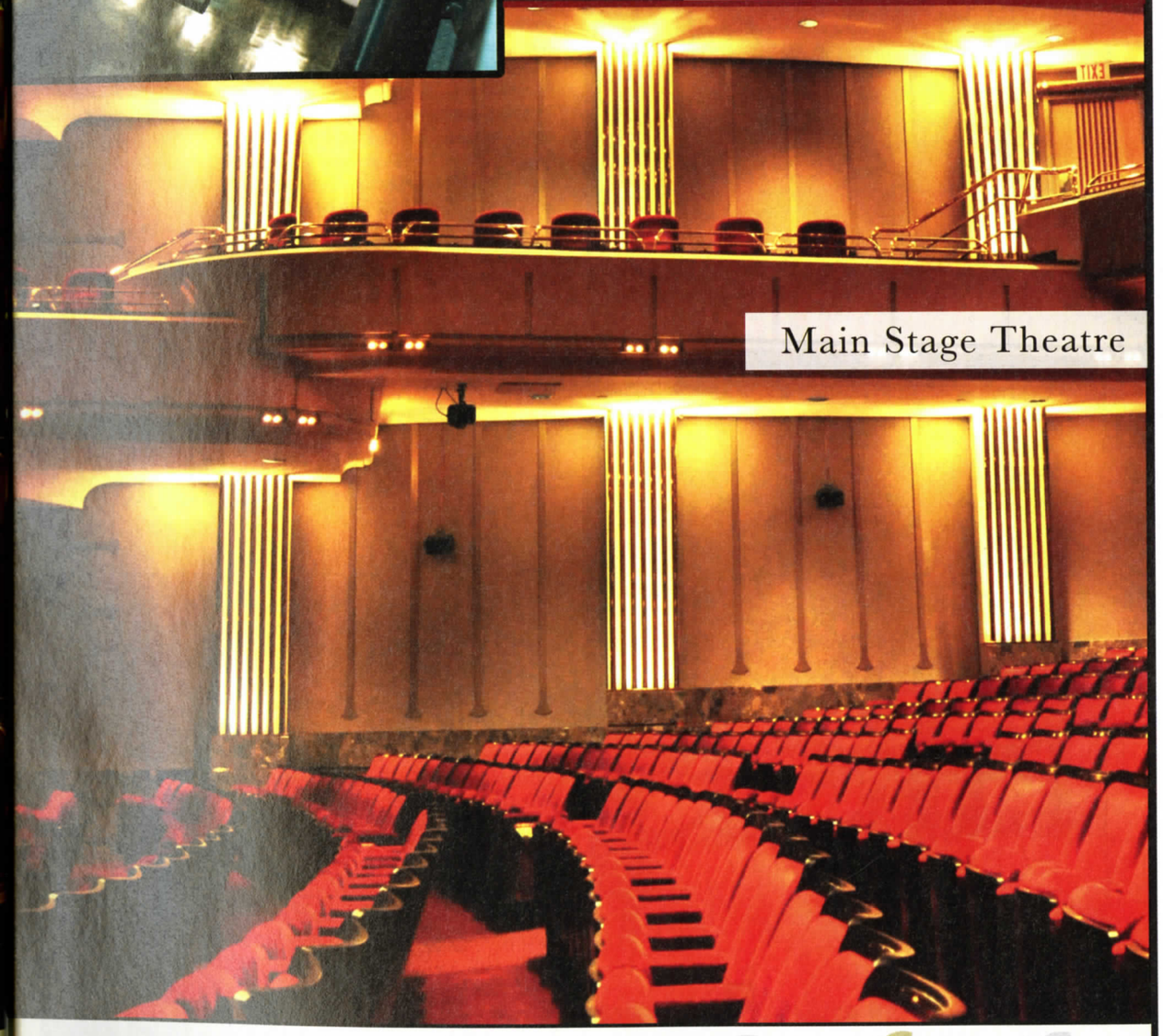

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DOING IT HER WAY

POET **NADINE WILLIAMS** STAGES A NEW ONE-WOMAN SHOW BY TONYA FACEY

Poet and linguist Nadine Williams is bringing her lyrical prowess to the stage in a new show, *Mono-Linguistics with a Twist!* To be performed at the Rose Theatre in Brampton, Ontario, it marks Williams' first solo show of this scale. A mix of theatrics, music and poetry, *Mono-Linguistics* is broken into sections focusing on four themes: spirituality, relationships, parenting and a tribute to Yawd (Jamaica). It will also blend Williams' unique sense of humour and performance-style with thematic musical accompaniment and wardrobe changes to engage the audience and get them thinking. Williams hopes that *Mono-Linguistics* strikes a chord and leaves the audience inspired. "I want people to be empowered with the idea that someone can have a dream and follow it right through to infinity," says Williams.

Earlier in her life, Williams, a former interior decorator, never anticipated a career as a poet. She does, however, seem to have been destined for the spotlight from a young age. Growing up as somewhat of a bookworm who read under the kerosene lamps at night in Jamaica, she was often asked to read aloud to friends and family members. Inadvertently, she developed a comfort and a knack for performing. Poetry came later on when Williams was working through the demise of her marriage. It became part of her healing process, as she turned to writing and sharing her poems with friends. Having received feedback and blessings from supportive friends, Williams began to write and share her poetry with the public.

Her poems, which touch on a variety of topics, including immigration, have allowed Williams to connect with an array of groups from schools to government officials while spreading her messages of empowerment and positive thinking. She's even had one of her poems displayed on the walls of Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital. Her voice has also been heard through speaking engagements at many events and workshops. And,Williams has managed to self-publish three books of poetry: *The Culmination of Marriage Between Me & My Pen*, *With This Pen I Do Tell* and *Love Rocks* (a children's book).

The positive reception may just be because Williams focuses on issues that resonate with her life and what she sees around her: "I try to write on very relevant issues that I'm passionate about, mostly women and kids issues," sums up Williams.

→ *MONO-LINGUISTICS with a TWIST!* debuts at the Rose Theatre in Brampton on Oct. 2, at 2 p.m. with another show 8:30 p.m. To purchase tickets, visit the Rose Theatre box office or e-mail nadineawilliams@hotmail.com.

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I AM LEGEND

A member of the Marley family takes viewers on a Rastafari journey

BY STEPHANIE POLLARD

Donisha Prendergast is a child of Rastafari — a linkage made through her family ties to musical legends Bob and Rita Marley. As one of the granddaughters of reggae music's most iconic figures, Prendergast grew up in a world that revered the art and life of her legendary relative. His legacy and her desire to dispel any misconceptions about the religious and cultural Rastafari movement inspired her to create the documentary *Rasta, A Soul's Journey*. It is a film that examines the global impact of Rasta culture. Along with Patricia Scarlett of Scarlett Media Inc., Prendergast travels the world, discovering the roots and the cultural expression into which Rastafari has evolved. "I wanted to know what Rasta was like around the world," Prendergast says of the project. "I thought I was just going to see the roots and evolution, but Rasta is a cultural expression. Not everybody who wears dreadlocks or smokes weed will claim to be Rasta ... but they're expressing Rasta in a certain essence, so it's just about understanding (that)."

Her cinematic journey encounters Rastafari communities in the U.S., Israel, India, Jamaica, South Africa, Ethiopia, Canada and the United Kingdom. In these countries, she meets with men and women who have chosen a Rastafari lifestyle, explore how the movement evolved in that particular place and ultimately hopes to find her purpose as a young Rasta woman. Prendergast is also hoping to banish the stereotypes that try to besmirch Rastafari's uplifting impact. "Rasta is a life of service. You don't sit down and beat drums every day," she says. "You go and work with the youth, you teach and you build. You also go and talk about Africa and find ways to reach Africa. You have work to do. That is the biggest misconception about Rasta, that you don't have work to do."

> "I WANTED TO KNOW WHAT RASTA WAS LIKE AROUND THE WORLD."

In fact, Prendergast believes part of her work will be similar to that of her grandmother Rita Marley, who founded the Robert Marley Foundation and assisted more than 200 children in the Konkonuru Methodist Basic School in Ghana where she lives. Prendergast is also aware that her role in Rastafari will influence young female followers in the movement: "I have two little sisters that think that I am the greatest person in the world," she says. "And I have to be that for them, especially them. And there are little girls out there like them who are not my little sisters but still want me to be a big sister, you know?" She has special advice for these little sisters in or outside of the Rastafari movement: "Don't be anybody else but yourself. That's the best person you can be."

photography **CHE KOTHARI**

a different angle

Director **Lana Lovell**'s latest documentary confronts stereotypes of single Black mother

BY SAADA BRANKER

In her latest documentary, director and filmmaker Lana Lovell offers a glimpse into the lives of three Black mothers who step out from society's pre-conceived shadows to go on record about raising children alone. *Resilience: Stories of Single Black Mothers* is Lovell's exploration as much as it is her own experience. Off-camera she poses provocative questions, uncovering a personal plight that's echoed in more Canadian households than we realize. Lovell sat down with *Sway* to discuss *Resilience*, which is scheduled for a public screening and discussion on Oct. 23 at the University of Toronto Innis Town Hall cinema.

Sway: Why make a film about single Black mothers?

LOVELL: I wanted a film that looked at the issue in a realistic way. I'd seen a number of films, documentaries and TV shows in which single mothers were represented and it was not truthful and could be harmful. I also was aware that the media portrayal of single Black mothers tended to be negative.

What were you thinking about in terms of stereotyping and the stigma?

That we live in a patriarchal society. Two hundred years ago, it was very important that women be in a marriage so that people could know who the father was. I think that kind of pressure and those kinds of norms continue today. That's one of the main reasons for women being stigmatized about having children when they're on their own — because what they are doing is taking control of their own sexuality. It's only when you have children that there's this impression that you had sex. The child is proof. Unfortunately, Black women have become the group that's targeted with, "Well, if you don't adhere to our society's norms and traditions, that is getting married and having a child in that relationship so that society will know whose child it is, you'll have to do this alone. You'll be poor."

What were you looking for in the women that you found?

I was looking for women who were openly honest about telling their stories. I talked to a lot of women and most told me many interesting personal stories about their lives and challenges that they had overcome. But, unfortunately, they weren't willing to do that on camera.

Why?

Some are private people. Some felt there was a bit of a stigma attached. It takes a certain amount of courage to open up your life and your home to a camera crew. You don't know what they're going to do and how they are going to portray you. So I was very lucky to get the three women that I did: Nancy, Simone and Gloria.

There's stigma and then there's glamorizing single motherhood. The Oscar-winning film, *Juno*, was accused of doing that. What does it mean to glamorize single motherhood?

Some of the women I talked to planned it. In one case, a 17-year-old woman and her boyfriend did. Then she got sick during her pregnancy and couldn't keep her job. He lost his. She was in a one-bedroom apartment. They lost the apartment and she had to move into a one-room in another place. He was too young, she was too young. But we don't really talk about emotional consequences. There are a lot.

Nancy, one of the women featured had a good foundation with all her resources and friends, and she was still overwhelmed. The public only sees films like *Juno* or TV shows that make it seem easier than it is. Remember, in this society we have 50 per cent of marriages ending in divorce, so as a woman you need to be in a position to look after your child.

Sway was there

DON MAC

THE CAKE BOSS

K'NAAN

JESSE REID

CAMERON BAILEY

BIG BOI WITH BUNNIES

KEVIN WEEKES WITH TIFF GALA-GOER

Lights, camera, action! Toronto claimed its title as the capital of Hollywood North during the 35th Toronto International Film Festival. *Sway* was among the star watchers as celebrities, actors and industry heavy weights practiced their best scene stealing poses on the red-carpeted streets of T.O.

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PHOTOGRAPHY MICHELLE CORTESE

GUYANA FASHION DESIGNER SONIA NOEL
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MICHAEL THOMAS AKA REMAN & MISS CANADA TOURISM 2010 MARIE MYRIE
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OSSIE GURLEY OF SILVER STARS STEEL ORCHESTRA
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MARGARETT BEST & LINCOLN ALEXANDER
TRIBUTE AWARDEE EARL LAPIERRE (L) NATASHA BOSTIC, ERROL ACHUE, KATHLEEN MILLS-REECE & GEORGE FRECKLETON

SCOTIABANK CARIBANA GALA PHOTOGRAPHY ROY VIRTUE

Black ties, evening gowns and the sounds of Soca filled the Liberty Grand Ballroom, as party-goers jumped up in celebration of Canada's largest cultural parade.

POETIC FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY ROY VIRTUE

DR. GERVAN FEARON (L) & FRANCES LANKIN

HAMLIN GRANGE

ANGELA WHITE OF RBC

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WELLESLEY BOLT, ALVIN CURLING & JENNIFER BOLT
PERFORMER LETNA ALLEN-ROWE

CA ANNIVERSARY PHOTOGRAPHY ROY VIRTUE

Toronto's Jamaican Canadian Association celebrated its 48th anniversary as an advocate of Jamaican culture, and a supporter of excellence and achievement in the community.

Youth from underserved city neighbourhoods gathered at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts in a showcase of artistic talent, creative energy and passion for peace.

TROPICANA PHOTOGRAPHY C.J. CROMWELL

Tropicana Community Services enjoyed a rousing evening in celebration of the non-profit agency at its 17th annual Caribbean Ball.

Get out!

October 2

(6:57 p.m.-Sunrise)
NUIT BLANCHE FESTIVAL (Free)
The annual contemporary art festival that lasts from sunset to sunrise marks its fifth anniversary. Spectators will get to enjoy and discover more than 130 projects within three zones, all of which are accessible and free.

Zone A: St. Clair, Bathurst, Bloor streets, Avenue road, Dupont and Bathurst streets
Zone B: Jarvis, University, Spadina and Parliament streets
Zone C: Dufferin, Ossington, Dundas, King, Queen, College and Front streets
More information: scotiabanknuitblanche.ca/home.shtml

November 3

(8 p.m.)
MEASHA BRUEGGERGOSMAN LIVE
($49.50-$89.50)
The Canadian opera sensation graces the stages this fall with her powerful voice.
Roy Thomson Hall (60 Simcoe St.)
More information: roythomson.com

October 15

ECSTASY
($30 Advanced; $40 Door)
Set in the boardrooms, bedrooms and dancehalls of modern day Jamaica, *Ecstasy* is the romantic comedy that suc cessfully launched the career of Jamai- can playwright David Heron. Starring De Silvera, David Heron, Nadia Khan, Al St. Louis & Flower Pryce.

November 4-5

(8 p.m.)
NATIONAL BLACK BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL CONVENTION
($250, member; $325, non-member; $200, student; and $250, corporate)
The Black Business and Professional Associa- tion is having its annual National Black Busine and Professional Convention in Toronto. It aims to give entrepreneurs, business owners and stu- dents the opportunity to connect and network.
Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel (123 Queen St. W.)
More information: nbbpc.eventbrite.com

November 11

(11 a.m.)
REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONIES (Free)
This is the time of the year when all Canadians come together to celebrate the memory of those who sacrificed their lives for the privileges we enjoy as a nation.
Queen's Park (Queen's Park Cres.)
More information: toronto.ca/lestweforget/index.htm

November 19-20

(9 p.m.)
BB KING LIVE
($55-$66.90)
The blues master plays his way throughout North America this fall. Take the opportunity to experience a piece of Black music at its finest.
Casino Rama (5899 Rama Rd.)
More information: casinorama.com/entertainment.html

December 3-5

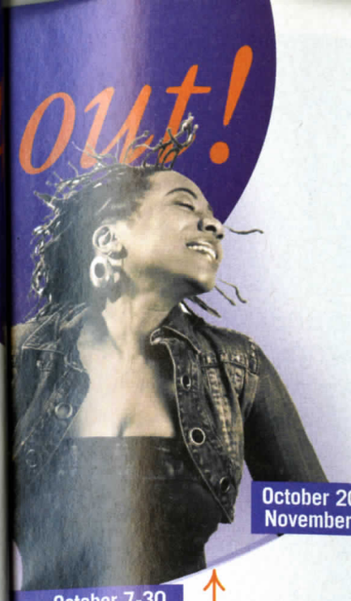
(8 p.m.)
SOULFOUL MESSIAH ($25-$45)
Soulful Messiah is a contemporary dance interpretation of Handel's oratorio, *The Messiah*. This soulful rendition, infused with R&B, incorporates Handel's *Messiah* and the voices of legendary Black singers, resulting in a blend of tap, popular and African-Caribbean dance movements.
Fleck Dance Theatre (207 Queens Quay W.)
More information: harbourfrontcentre.com/whatson

December 4

(4 p.m.)
FIFTH ANNUAL ARONI AWARDS GALA
Celebrate the achievements of youth in our commu ty with the Aroni Awards Gala. The evening will ho Aroni Image and Aroni Education Award recipients will also feature live performances, celebrity appea ances and more.
Arcadian Court (401 Bay St.)
More information: aroniawards.com

Every Friday

SEX, RELATIONSHIPS, AND SOMETIMES...LOVE
(7 p.m.)
Written by L.A.-based Joelle Arqueros and directed by Roger Dundas, these monologues characterize the raw, delicate and poignant perspectives of sex and love. They are modern, candid, topical, and for all walks of life: men, women, cross gender, straight, gay, and human.
More information: ticketweb.ca or sexrelationshipsandsometimeslove.ca.



October 7-30

LOVE, LOSS, AND WHAT I WORE
Award-wining writer and actor Trey Antho- ny (*'da Kink in my Hair*) co-stars in this intimate collection of stories covering some of life's most poignant moments and their corresponding wardrobe.
More information: ticketking.com or 416-872-1212.

October 20 - November 5

Toronto International Festival of Authors
($10; or free for members and students/youth with valid ID. Certain exceptions apply)
This festival aims to provide Canadian authors with the opportunity to showcase their literary works on an international level. It also helps audiences to realize the variety found in Canadian literature.
Harbourfront Centre (235 Queens Quay W.)
More information: readings.org/

October 26

(8 p.m.)
CHEAPER TO KEEP HER
($55.50-$105.50)
This romantic comedy about a seemingly perfect marriage in the midst of collapse features an all-star cast that includes R&B sensation Brian McKnight, Vivica A. Fox and Christian Keyes.
Massey Hall (178 Victoria St.)
More information: masseyhall.com

October 23

(6:30 p.m.)
Poplife Champagne Ball Featuring Ne-Yo Live
($55.50 - $145.50)
Grammy Award-winning R&B wonder Ne-Yo makes his way to T.O. to keep Torontonians rocking through the night.
Air Canada Centre (40 Bay St.)
More information: theaircanadacentre.com/events

November 10- December 4

(7:30 p.m.)
THE CURE FOR EVERYTHING
($10 - $14)
In Maja Aradi's new play, *The Cure for Everything*, Elsa is approaching 15 and at the dawn of her sexuality. As she is flung into a world of sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll and the supposed female liberation that comes with free love, Elsa tries to solve not only her problems, but also the world's.
Theatre Passe Muraille (16 Ryerson Ave.)
More information: passemuraille.on.ca

November 5-7

THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S SHOW
($14)
The Metro Toronto Convention Centre will be packed with vendors, exhibits and presentations focused on decorating, fashion, beauty, fitness, careers and more.
Metro Toronto Convention Centre
(South Building, 222 Bremner Blvd.)
More information: nationalwomenshow.com/

November 27

(8 p.m.)
JULLY BLACK LIVE
($35)
The Canadian queen of R&B and soul powers her way into our Get Out! sec- tion this fall with a series of concerts taking place in Perth, Ontario.
Mason Theatre (13 Victoria St.)
More information: perthpac.org/

November 21

(4 p.m.)
BARBADOS INDEPENDENCE THANKSGIVING SERVICE (Free)
If Barbados is your place of birth or a part of your cultural background, this service is a wonderful way to learn about the culture while giving thanks for the independence that the island gained on November 30, 1966.
St. James Cathederal (65 Church St.)
More information: stjamescathedral.on.ca

January 7

HARRY JEROME AWARDS — CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
The Black Business and Professional Association is seek- ing nominees for its 2011 Harry Jerome Awards. Submis- sions are due by 4p.m. on Jan. 7, 2011. The ceremony takes place on April 30, 2011 at the Toronto Congress Centre.
More information: bbpa.org, 416-504-4097 or bbpa@bellnet.ca

Real Relationships

Our expert **Rachael-Lea Rickards** has all the answers for those looking for love in all the right (and wrong) places

DEAR RACHAEL-LEA,

I write this hoping that someone out there will relate to my dilemma. I've been dating my girlfriend for several months now, and I think that things could become serious. I've met her parents, who are extremely welcoming. She has not met mine and is starting to ask questions. I blame it on their busy schedules or that they go to bed early and aren't the most sociable people. I'm a light skinned Black male and my girlfriend is the sexiest dark skinned woman that I've ever laid my eyes on. I think she's beautiful, but I don't think my parents will. They have always been prejudiced against dark skinned Blacks. It's crazy, right? I couldn't even try to explain it to her. I'm so terribly embarrassed. My parents encourage me to find someone they can "relate to" and have tried to set me up with their friends' light skinned daughters. I'm not attracted to light skinned women. How do I admit to her that she's probably not that welcome at their dinner table?

Signed,
Loves My Dark Skinned Woman

Dear LMDSW,

This is a problem that has been plaguing the Black community since slavery. The house negro/field negro division still creeps into our everyday life. I will mention that this does not only plague the Black community, but several ethnic communities. The idea that dark skin is not beautiful is your parents' issue, not yours or your girlfriend's. I do think, however, that if you truly love this woman, you need to have a conversation with your parents. Speak from your heart and tell them how extremely happy she makes you. Hopefully your parents will come around. If you find that they won't bend, you need to be honest with your girlfriend. The worst thing you could do is to not prepare her. Stop making excuses for their ignorance, but do remember that these ideals have been passed down for generations. It's not going to change overnight. Besides, you have to live your life and listen to what your heart tells you. Now, go get two scoops of your chocolate mocha!

DEAR RACHAEL-LEA,

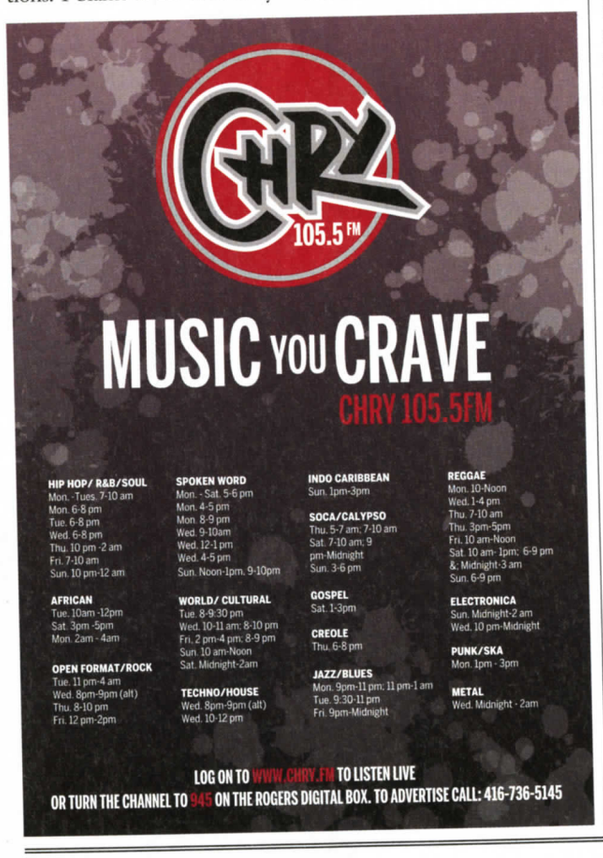
I am 37 and I have been with the same man for 23 years. I am the mother of two of his children. He has four, but the other two are from other women. Needless to say, they were a result of his cheating. However, I have opened my heart and home and treat them both as my own. But, he is still cheating. I, being either a complete idiot or just plain old fashioned, have tried hard to get past it and hoped that someday things would change. He recently planned another "boys weekend", which is just an excuse to be with some sleazy woman. I told him if he walked out on his family again not to come back! But he did come back and I feel so stupid for letting him back in. He's got to go, but I can't help feeling like I've failed my kids. Twenty-three years is a long time and I don't know where to find the strength.

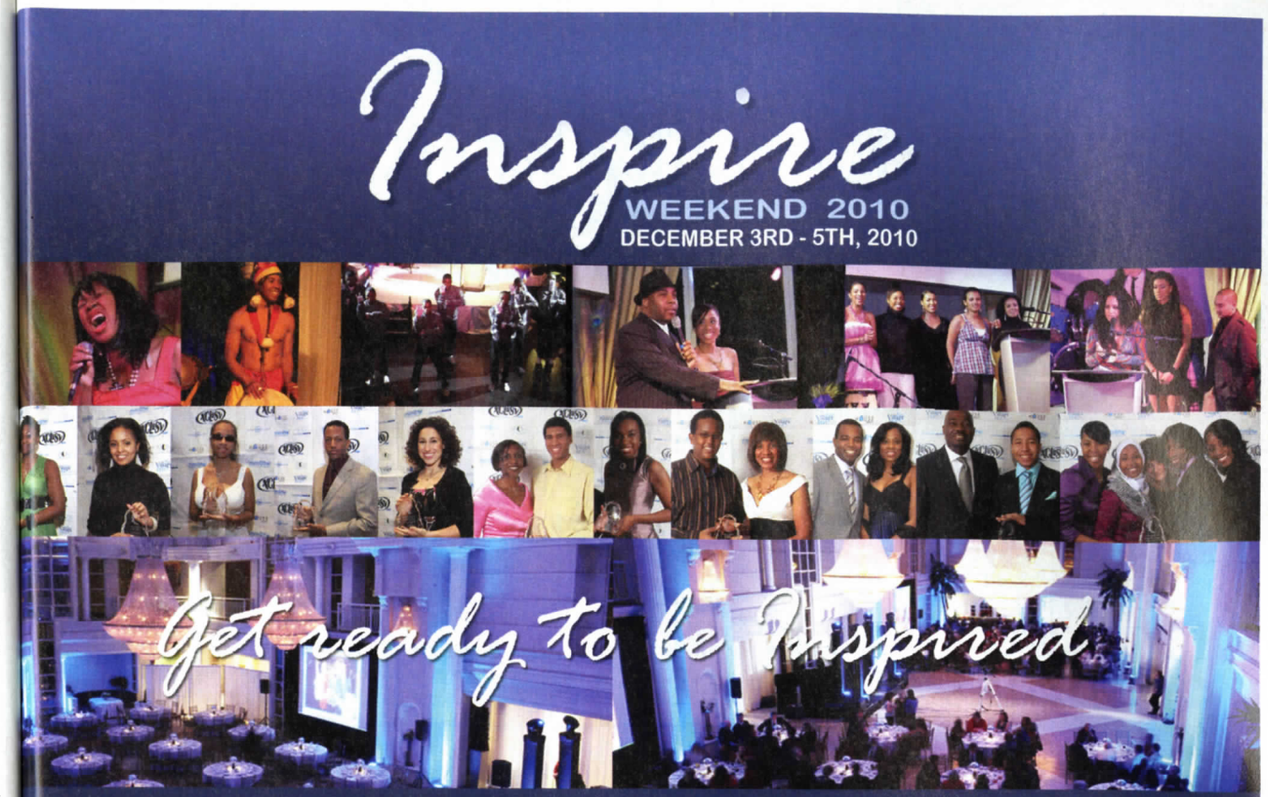
Signed,
Idiot Girl

Dear IG,

Girl, you and I both know that you know the answer to this one. But, let me break it down for you a little bit more. First, as angry as you are about his cheating, be advised that these "sleazy women" probably don't know that you exist. If they do, they probably suffer from the same self-esteem issues as you. It's sad and disgusting, but we don't know what your man is feeding them. Second, God bless you for caring for all of his children. They will be thankful that you took the risk to love them. But, look at what you're doing. You're housing him, taking care of his children and constantly providing for a man who does not show you that you are valuable. You're staying because of the kids? Trust me, children know when their parents aren't happy. By leaving, they'll respect you more for choosing a healthy situation and you'll encourage them to make the right choices in their relationships. If you can't love yourself enough to leave, what makes you think he'll love you enough to stay? Wipe the slate clean and look forward to 23 drama-free years.

→ Got questions? Write to advice@allthingsrachael-lea.com. For video blogs and advice, visit allthingsrachael-lea.com

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REFLECTIONS *on fatherhood*

Senator **Anne C. Cools** shares her thoughts on the importance of family

Since 1984, I have been in public service as a member of the Senate of Canada, so summoned by then Governor General Edward Schreyer, on the recommendation of the late Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. This summons simultaneously made me Canada's first Black senator and the first Black female senator in North America. As a senator, I have participated in federal politics and faced many daunting challenges, striving to meet them by calling up what my Methodist mother described as the 'courage of one's convictions.'

As a child in colonial Barbados, in the then British West Indies, I was raised in the British intellectual tradition of criticism and self-criticism. I was taught the importance of family and the principles of civic responsibility, duty and service to fellow human beings. I was taught to emulate those recognized as the fathers of social justice, such as 19th century social reformer Lord Shaftesbury, who toiled to end barbarous child labour practices in England's industrial factories; and William Wilberforce, the Evangelical Anglican abolitionist, who laboured and persevered toward the abolition of slavery and the slave trade.

In 2002 in Washington, D.C., I was invited to address 2,000 mostly Black Americans, who were engaged in working with and healing fragile Black families. My subject was *Voices of Women in the Fatherhood Movement*. I spoke to the centrality and importance of children having meaningful and continuous relationships with both their mothers and fathers. In recent years, with the ascendency of certain ideologies, it has been admitted that children absolutely need their mothers, but not necessarily their fathers. In fact, misguided public policy has contributed to the alienation of fathers, and to dispossessing children of their fathers. Certainly, men and women are equally capable of being bad or good parents, as virtue and vice are human characteristics, not gendered ones. My speech moved the audience, who as Black Americans were concerned with the stability of the Black family, fathering, the diminution of Black men, and the social condition in which one in three Black men will spend time in prison.

After my speech, and its considerable applause, the host organization's president, Dr. Jeffery Johnson, thanked me. He said that my speech was a special moment for him and for the audience. He stated that it was rare for Black people in the United States to be addressed by a Black senator, particularly a Black female senator. His words gave me pause, and caused me to reflect deeply on the fact that a national, federal Black senator was and still is a very rare creature in the United States.

As Canada's first Black senator, I attended Mr. Trudeau's funeral on Oct. 3, 2000. Each fall, I reflect on him and his bold action in making me a senator. He chose me because of my work with people who were in pain, wounded and damaged in the most vulnerable of all human relationships — the intimate ones between spouses, and family members. Mr. Trudeau admired my work to end domestic violence, to mend broken families, and to bring healing and reconciliation between loved ones. In fact, I had promised him that I would never cease my commitment in this area of human need. On the next day, we paid tribute to him in the Senate. In closing my tribute, I said: "Mr. Trudeau's greatest legacy is a personal one that resonates with all Canadian parents who struggle, sometimes in the face of adversity, to raise their children. His greatest legacy is that of being a parent. His greatest contribution to Canada has been his achievement as a parent and his contribution to fatherhood." S

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